To
TOMMIE,
who saw it all
and bade me set it down.

First impression October, 1946

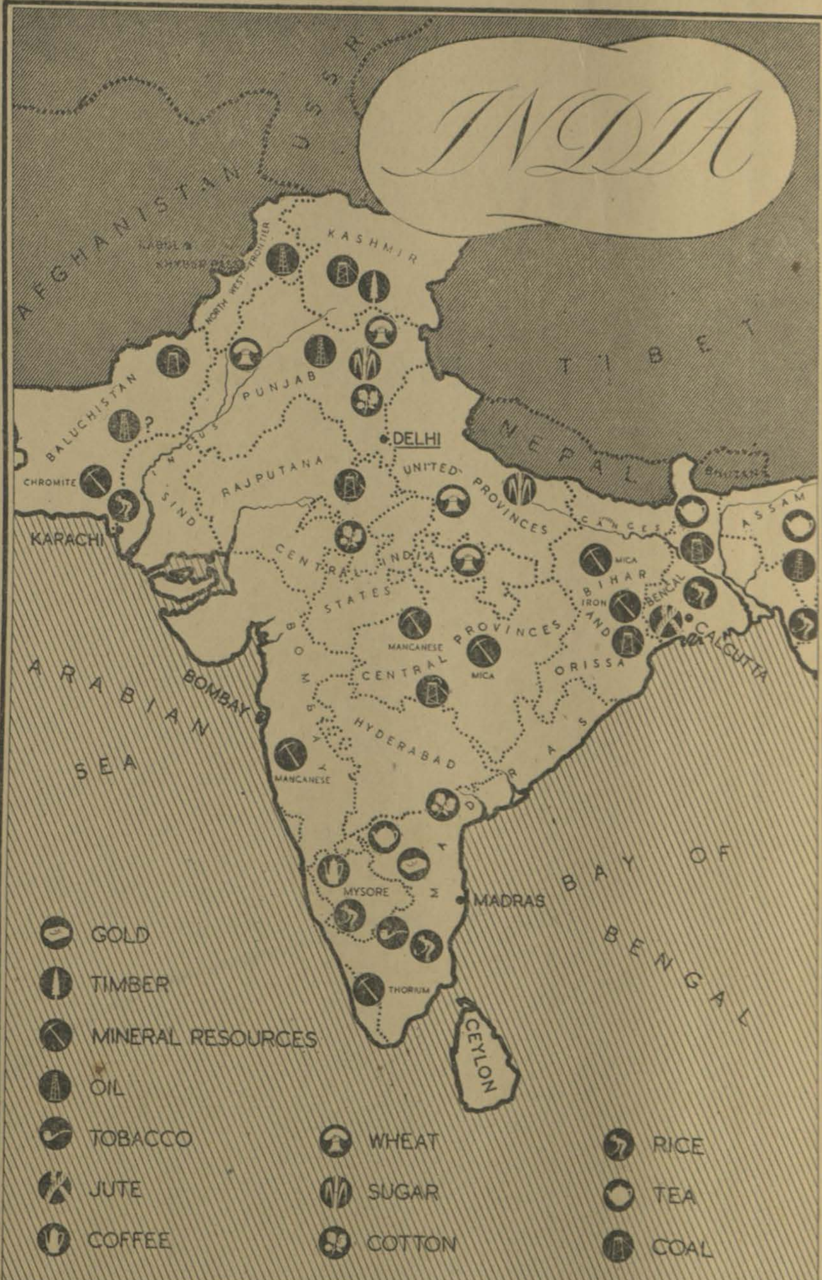
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BROWN EMPIRE

by

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GOLD
TIMBER
MINERAL RESOURCES
OIL
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RICE
TEA
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CHAPTER I.

Is there anywhere anyone who, being a party to a pregnancy, has not as the time of labour draws on experienced misgivings as to the wisdom of projecting a new life into a complex world; who, indeed, has not been troubled by chilling doubts as to what the offspring might be—man-child or monster? Such misgivings are but natural in all who possess a sense of responsibility, who recognise that the need of the world is a constant reinforcement of clean-blooded vitality inspired by high vision, tempered by breadth of understanding and devoted to the service of humanity.

Where there is no taint, what is conceived in love should be born in splendour, but who shall say what may emerge from the couplings of compulsion? Thus it is with India. What will the new-born Brown Empire prove to be—a stalwart among nations, a hulking, shiftless burden, or a crafty, insensate monster?

It matters much to a world already weary of coping with misfits and morons, a world so contracting in terms of time and space, through speed's conquest of distance and in the sense of the international overlap of national affairs, that none can longer live alone or unto himself, but all must accept interdependence as the law of survival.

If one is to judge by child-bed outcry and labour so protracted as finally to necessitate resort to instruments, this Brown Empire displays a reluctance to make an entrance at variance with earlier agitation within the womb and according ill with the majesty of the heritage that awaits. Yet this birth, however much delayed, was inevitable and the begetting foreordained. As far back as 1835, Macaulay in his famous "Minute on Education" visualised an India, having become instructed in European knowledge, some day demanding European political institutions. And a century ago Henry Lawrence, the great administrator, looked forward to the day

when British dominion should end "not with convulsions, but with mutual esteem and affection."

In the intervening years declarations of British policy on the whole have reflected the same spirit, though not always keeping pace with Indian aspirations. On occasions, admittedly, British policy has seemed to curb rather than spur India to freedom, but at the back of it all the notion of Britain's design being one of education towards emancipation has persisted. However, until the 1946 mission of accouchement this emancipation was to find its fulfilment within the framework of the British Commonwealth of Nations; it was left to Mr. Attlee to put it upon Indians themselves to opt for Dominion status or complete independence.

Not only did this announcement confound European and American critics of "imperialism," it also left super-charged Indian agitation suspended in mid-air. The object of the accoucheurs—Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and Mr. A. V. Alexander, three senior Cabinet Ministers, with the first-named holding the office of Secretary of State for India—was to aid the delivery of full power by procuring agreement between Indian communities as to what the constitution and government of the new India should be. It was hoped that Mother India would be delivered without the aid of forceps, but one complication after another arose as the period of labour dragged on. After 14 weeks in which Indian tempers kept company with the ever-rising temperature and the Cabinet trio came to appreciate to the full what Kipling meant by heat that makes "yer blinkin' eyebrows crawl," it seemed that the main Indian parties were less eager to realise mutual self-government than to wriggle into a position where each could throw the blame for non-realisation on the other and on Britain.

Those who have lived their lives in India were not surprised by this development; in all grades and communities the disinclination to become finally answerable is as universal as it is

deplorable. So far as the Hindus are concerned, the excuse might be offered that it was not in the tradition of their educated class to take supreme responsibility. Since the time when Henry VIII was King of England, Hindus have taken the orders of others, first of the Mogul Emperors and later of the British. As to the Moslems, Sikhs, Untouchables, Christians and Parsees, they are minorities, big and small, and it has suited them to subserve the paramount Power in return for an undertaking that their rights, religious and civil, would be safeguarded. The India of the Princes, comprising two-fifths of the territory of the sub-continent and more than one-fifth of its population, is another minority, but in a different category; its tradition of responsibility, though autocratic, is internal, the ultimate decision on major issues remaining by treaty with the British overlords.

Recognition of this situation has accounted for the past British policy of gradualism, the stage by stage approach to full self-government. But Indian nationalism has shown itself petulant as well as passionate; it has magnified the blitherings of boors into a manifesto of white race-superiority and perverted the admonishings of alien mentors into a denial of the right of self-determination. At the time of the 1942 Cripps offer of post-war Dominion home-rule, Jawaharlal Nehru, of the Congress Party and, since September 2, 1946, Chief Minister of the all-Indian Interim Government formed by the Viceroy, Viscount Wavell, declared that he had the strongest feeling that Britain was insincere and intended to hang on to India at all costs. And during the 1946 negotiations, he and other Congress leaders exhibited a similar distrust, which has hardly evaporated even now.

What practical student of history, they argued, could expect a ruling power, regardless of its nationality, voluntarily to abdicate its rule from rich and strategic possessions in which the people were still not united or organised to compel the withdrawal of that power? The astute minds of India asked

themselves whether they would surrender sovereignty in similar circumstances and they bore in mind historic statements on the inter-relationship of Britain and India. For example, the eloquent utterance of Lord Curzon, as Viceroy in 1903, that:

"Our Indian dominions directly touch those of Turkey and many parts of the Arabian peninsula, those of Russia on the Pamirs, those of China along the borders of Turkestan, those of France on the upper Mekong . . . . The geographical position of India will more and more push her into the forefront of international politics and she will more and more become the strategical frontier of the British Empire."

Since Lord Curzon spoke, wars and partitions have slightly modified the picture. India no longer touches the border of Turkish territory and it is a Burma separated from India that rubs shoulders with French Indo-China on the upper Mekong. For the rest, however, the significance remains, as does that of another speech of Lord Curzon's, delivered to the London Society of Pilgrims three years later, in which he said:

"When you remember that three out of every four of the subjects of the King are in India and that, with the possible exception of China, India is the largest and most populous political aggregation in the universe, then I think you will begin to realise to what extent the British Empire is an Asiatic Empire, and how, if we cut out the Asiatic portion of it, it would inevitably dwindle in scale and importance."

There have been numerous other utterances over the years in Parliament and Press on why Britain could not afford to give up India. In 1930, Lord Rothermere pointed out in the "Daily Mail" that, India being the lynch-pin of the British Empire, "if we lose India the Empire must collapse—first economically, then politically." In the same year the restrained and reasoned "Manchester Guardian," discussing why "a self-regarding England" may hesitate to relax her

control over India, recalled that British influence in the past partly depended on the power to use Indian troops and resources in time of need. And in 1935, when the Act making India a Federal Union was under discussion, Mr. Churchill in a transatlantic broadcast remarked that "two out of every ten Englishmen depend on India."

In the light of these very frank statements on the vital role of India in the strategic and industrial structure of Britain, plus the fact that fundamental national policy usually over-rules party politics, it is understandable that Indian nationalists misdoubted the real intentions of a Socialist Government at Westminster.

Undeniably we are giving up much—some persons of proved competency in the assessment of values are aghast at just how much; yet, it is a giving that hopes thereby to gain. The British Empire which reached its territorial zenith in the Steel Age possessed a quality of steeliness; its reinforcing rods had the rigidity of steel; it was framed on a policy of "to have and to hold." But now, it would seem, the Steel Age gives place to the Plastic Age, wherein tie-rods are to be more elastic, even transparent. Changing circumstances, together with necessary concessions to the rising tide of Asiatic nationalism, would appear to warrant, at least in the minds of the Socialist Government, a modification of past policy to the extent that we now seek to have (facilities) but not to hold (territories).

All first-hand observers agree that what is happening in India to-day is but one part of a tremendously important and critical historic development in Asia. Other parts are being enacted simultaneously in China, Indonesia, Indo-China and the Philippines and, to only a slightly lesser degree, in Burma and Siam. In this new Asia the concern of European statesmanship is constantly to make the adjustments necessary to balance the changing relationships.

There could hardly be a more exacting task, nor one so

thorny with exasperations. The British Cabinet Mission, after remaining twice as long in India as anticipated, was able to say no more than that progress had been made, but that it depended very largely now on the degree of co-operation between the Indian parties. The three major bodies—Congress, Moslem League and the Princes—agreed to the proposal to set up a Constituent Assembly which is to attempt the framing of a Federal constitution, but this may amount to no more than a stable full of unhobbled mules. Heels have already been flying. First, Congress would not go to the manger, while the Moslem League would. Then Congress would and did, while the League would not. League participation in the Constitutional Assembly even took on a dubious aspect. In an effort to straighten things out, the Princes' India announced on September 23, 1946, that it was resolved to take no part in the Constituent Assembly unless Congress and League were actively represented in it. The Princes thus dispelled any illusion that either Congress or Moslem League was going to frame the new constitution without the co-operation of the other. It was shrewd use of the independence remaining with the Princes until a Federal Union of India comes into being.

For long "independence" has been a Congress catch-cry and one that had to be echoed by other parties lest Congress gain political advantage, yet the word as used in India lacks a common definition. Challenged by his followers to define independence once and for all, Mr. Gandhi produced the following fantasy in his newspaper "Harijan" on May 5, 1946:—

"In concrete terms, then, the independence should be political, economic and moral. Political necessarily means the removal of the control of the British Army in every shape and form. Economic means entire freedom from British capitalists and capital, as also their Indian counterpart. Moral means freedom from armed defence forces. My conception of inde-

pendence (i.e., Rama Rajya, 'the Kingdom of God on earth') excludes replacement of the British Army by a national army of occupation."

It goes without saying that the martial Moslems and Sikhs, who look to the armed forces as one of their standard professions, summarily reject this Hindu definition. And we may be sure that ambitious Indian capitalists, who have all along financed the independence campaign, do not take too kindly to being casually brushed off by a wizened little man they have regarded as their catspaw.

CHAPTER 2.

Out of the recommendations and decisions affecting the transfer of power from British to Indian hands arises a question: "What is this India, apart from her physical and geographical aspects? What did she represent in the past; what gave strength to her then? How did she lose that old strength, and has she lost it completely? Does she represent anything vital now, apart from being the home of a vast number of human beings? How does she fit into the modern world?"

This rhetorical questioning is not mine. Significantly it comes from one second only to Gandhi in his influence over the Congress Party—the Pundit Jawaharlal Nehru, and appears in his new book "The Discovery of India."

Quite understandably, one so nationalistic and erudite as Nehru would not pose such a multiple question without having ready an answer. Being a Hindu and a Brahmin he looks at the past—into the half-legendary Golden Age of Hindu Empire—and finds in that misty past the signpost to the future.

Although Nehru wrote "The Discovery of India" while he was interned during the war years, the vision was still upon him in March, 1946, when, with the Socialist Governor of Bengal, Sir Frederick Burrows, he was a speaker at the Convocation of the University of Calcutta.

"Asia," he told the graduates, "is now slowly coming into her own and in future will be the centre of both trouble and progress. Europe will, no doubt, continue to play an important part in world affairs because of its high culture, but nevertheless is moving away from the stage."

Anticipating events more specifically, Nehru added:

"In India and a greater part of Asia we have lost the vitality

which we possessed long ago. We are, however, regaining that vitality and are going to play a big part in future world affairs.

"India, by virtue of her geographical position, is going to be the centre of contact with south-east Asia, Australia, New Zealand and western Asia. India will be the base for the defence of south-east Asia, the western part of the Indian Ocean and will become the great trading centre of Asia.

"India in the past," Nehru went on, "had been the mother country influencing the whole of Asia, memory of which is still preserved in many parts of the continent. When India is free it will be for her to choose her friends and allies. It will be for her to decide what her foreign and internal policy shall be."

There you have, quite plainly put, the Hindu and Congress aspirations to Empire. India over Asia, inheritor of Japan's broken dream of hegemony. But what of the Moslems, strategically able to act as brake or spur? If Mr. Jinnah, preoccupied with his problems of Pakistan, looks inward while Pundit Nehru looks outward, there is, nonetheless, a striking similarity of Hindu and Moslem view on the role India aims (and believes herself destined) to play in Asia. The Aga Khan, a religious head of the widespread Ismaili sect of Mohammedans and sponsor of Mr. Jinnah as permanent President of the Moslem League, took time off during his February, 1946, visit to Bombay, when he was ceremonially balanced in jockey scales against diamonds contributed by his adherents, to envisage the new Empire thus:

"In the case of India, which is a small world to itself," he told the Press, "I would say that what is needed is a confederation of linguistic areas, including a union of the Moslems in their own federated State. The federation, or confederation, should go as far afield as possible. It should be bounded by China in the east and the Arab League in the west, Russia in the north, and Africa and Australia in the south. I en-

visage a large confederation of populations that clearly want a unit which will go a long way to remove future dangers.

"I envisage," added His Highness, "a Pakistan as part of an Indian and South Asiatic Confederation, to include Burma and Siam in the east, probably Afghanistan and possibly Iran in the west and, certainly, Ceylon in the south—a great Asiatic Confederation."

Although Malaya, together with Java and the rest of the Netherland East Indies, to say nothing of French Indo-China, were not individually named by the Aga Khan, as were other adjacent areas, they lie within the general area of his Confederacy. Presumably the independent Kingdom of Nepal, home of the renowned Gurkhas, and self-segregated Tibet likewise are included.

Since India itself is a sub-continent with problems of unity or federation even less easy of solution than those of Western Europe, it may seem rather beyond the bounds of possibility that an Asiatic Confederacy, covering about half the population of the world and beset by all manner of racial and religious antagonisms, would hold together even if it could be brought together.

The Aga Khan, however, does not think so. Nor, for that matter, does Pundit Nehru and many another Indian—Hindu or Moslem—to whom Independent India is synonymous with "Open Sesame" to fabulous power, wealth and dominion.

With simple assurance, the Aga Khan amplified his conception of an Asiatic Confederation thus: "The Confederation would have no frontiers between its constituent members in the normal sense of the word, each State being a unit, like the units of the British Empire.

"All those things which affected the Confederation as a whole," he went on, "would have to be handled by a body representing all the units of the federation, while, in other matters, each unit would look after its own affairs and would

work out its own social, economic and intellectual life. But it follows that you must first give independence to India before the other countries will look towards India. Otherwise, Siam and Burma will look to China, and Afghanistan and Iran will drift towards the Soviet Union."

There you have the genesis of the new Empire which both Hindus and Moslems aspire to erect. Quite obviously it is not to be a federation of units equal in status; those lesser in number, wealth, power and development are to come under the domination of the greater—of India's Hindus and Moslems, in just the same way that the areas and peoples marked as within Tokyo's Co-Prosperity Sphere were to have existed as Japanese satellite States.

For reasons passionately held, even if they appear weak to an outsider, Indians, regardless of race or religion, maintain that they have an historic mission in Asia at large and an established right to regard south-east Asia as their sphere of influence. The Hindus base their claims on the eastward spread of their culture and religion many centuries ago and on the export of Hinduism's offshoot, Buddhism, even as far as Japan. The uncomfortable fact that Buddhism's austerity proved too tart for India's sensual palate and was long ago virtually discarded in the land of its conception, is ignored by the proponents of "India uber Asia." The stress is laid upon the Hinduism of Ceylon, of the island of Bali and the bygone Hindu influence in Cambodia. The Moslems likewise found their claims on religion, on the adherence to the Islamic faith of the Malays, Javanese and other Indonesians.

But if India's title to overlordship of southern Asia is historically more than a little dubious, even on religious grounds, her intention to set herself up as suzerain is quite definite. To quote Nehru again: "India, constituted as she is, cannot play a secondary part in the world. She will either count for a great deal or not count at all."

At a Press conference in Karachi about six weeks before the British Cabinet mission arrived in India, Nehru made another reference to the extent to which he believes India "will count for a great deal."

He said: "India is likely to dominate politically and economically the Indian Ocean region. In the natural order of events the countries to the right and left of India will come closer together for mutual protection as well as mutual trade."

Referring to self-determination, he declared: "We have arrived at a stage to-day in the world when even complete national self-determination is limited in many ways by world factors. We demand complete independence for India as a whole, but we always make it clear that there can be no complete independence for any country in the sense of isolation. Independence and interdependence have to go together in this world."

Could Gandhi's political heir and ardent aspostle of self-determination mean there could be no "complete independence in the sense of isolation" for Burma, for Ceylon, for Siam, for Indonesia? It seems he most certainly could and did mean that. These countries in the Congress view must all look to India, must all shelter under the spread of India's wings. That the wings universal over India are those of that ghoulish trio, the vulture, carrion crow and kite-hawk, is perhaps significant for the people of the Indian Ocean region due to be dominated politically and economically by the successors to the British Raj.

If it seems odd to hear sentiments which have the all too familiar ring of Nazism spoken by one reputed to be a Socialist and one whose utter condemnation of Fascism has been repeatedly expressed, it needs to be remembered that there is a big difference between generalities and particularities. Kashmir-born Cambridge-graduate Nehru speaks better English than most British-born people, but his thought pro-

cesses are innately Indian, so that saying one thing and thinking another is just an Oriental commonplace.

Even Gandhi himself, the high priest of the non-violent creed of *ahimsa* is a mass of contradictions. In Simla in 1945, irritated by an Indian Press photographer's persistent efforts to get a candid camera shot, the Mahatma, frail though he is, leapt forward, seized the camera and smashed it. If an odd lapse from grace might be overlooked in one so great, we can hardly fail to take cognisance of a more recent re-interpretation of non-violence. At his prayer meeting in Delhi on April 18, 1946, he exhorted his disciples to shed their fear of a civil war. "What," said the Mahatma, "if riots do take place and many are killed in the process? Every man must die one day."

Earlier, in May, 1940, Gandhi delivered himself of another utterance equally at variance with his non-violent reputation. Writing in his newspaper, "Harijan," on what would be the situation if the British withdrew from India, he said: "Supposing the worst happened and we had civil war. It would last for a few days or a few months and then we would settle down to business."

I instance these Gandhian contradictions merely to illustrate the cold fact that the little man is a politician first and foremost and a saint only when saintliness serves his political and religious purposes. His non-violence has been not so much a creed as a weapon against the British administration. Every non-violent campaign has led to violence, as Gandhi must have foreseen that it would. The tactical use of non-violence has been to provoke violence and thereby serve the double purpose of spreading hatred of the British in India and condemnation of British "repression" outside India, particularly in America.

Contrary to what Indian propagandists would have the world believe, India is a violent country. Her sun, wind, rain —all are violent. Her diseases are violent. Her history is a succession of violence. There is violence in her religious practices. The cult of Thuggee, wherein the goddess Bhowani

(another name for the repulsive Kali) is placated by human sacrifice through strangulation; the planting of steel pins and nails in the flesh of Hindu devotees; the custom requiring widows to immolate themselves on their husbands' funeral pyre, all these are violences immemorially bound up with Hinduism and, even where forbidden to-day, are forbidden by British and not by Hindu law.

In peace, as in war, the profession of arms has always been an honourable one in India, the warrior caste ranking second only to the priestly Brahmins. Practically every great figure in Indian history, aside from Buddha and certain other religious reformers crying in the wilderness, has sought to gain empire by force. Asoka, Chandragupta, Baber, Akbar, Sivaji the Mahratta and lesser lights all established themselves by the sword, however benevolent some of them may later have become as administrators. And, such is the Indian character, their empires decayed as their rule, or that of their line, softened.

Throughout the East there is an instinct to go with the strength, to subserve the strong, even the ruthless. Aggressive Japan, though marching on India, was admired while she moved from strength to strength. It was not only in a non-co-operating spirit of nationalism that Indian industrialists in 1942 paid wages in advance to permit their employees to strike and so hold up war production at a vital moment. It was as much because the industrialists thought Japan would turn the British out of Asia, and India, as was her wont, would receive with respect the new manifestations of omnipotence.

There is lustful envy of virility in India, virility of head and arm as well as of loins. The strength of Britain, America and Russia is assumed to arise solely from the infallible tonic of industrial and military might. As the world's most ardent absorber of aphrodisiacs, India sees in a strong dose of the same potion just what it needs to accomplish its imperious desires in Asia.

CHAPTER 3.

The question next arises: Has India got what it takes to turn the alluring vision of Empire in the East into hard actuality?

Immediate past history shows that Mussolini's Fascist State could have no real substance for the simple reason that Italy lacked basic material resources. Hitler had them, together with the highly developed heavy and light industries necessary to any nation essaying to become a world factor. His failure was a gross miscalculation of the ability of those he challenged to marshal and unleash within a given time greater material strength than he was able to command. Japan, on the other hand, was foredoomed from the start simply because she lacked certain essentials, such as oil, rubber (natural or synthetic), steel and foodstuffs and, where these were secured in the first impetuous rush into south-east Asia, was unable to find the shipping to transport them to her own industrial centres.

Those who are determined that India shall be dominant in Asia have ready to hand all the natural resources Hitler could command and all those whose lack was inevitably the undoing of Mussolini and Tojo. Indeed, no country was every launched on a career of its own choosing with such ready-made material advantages as India.

Although she can trace her history by record and legend back five thousand years, modern India is under 200 years old and as such is the product of British development. Her primary and secondary resources have been surveyed, and India already is one of the world's biggest producing countries. She also has the advantage of a network of rail, road, telegraph and telephone communications, as well as her own air and shipping services.

Compared with the United States and Australia, India gets away to a flying start in the free nationhood stakes. After the War of Independence, the United States had to turn to the

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gigantic task of exploring its hinterland, prospecting its natural resources and obtaining a population with which to exploit them. Australia likewise entered upon self-government with a continent virtually undeveloped and the same need to breed or import a population to cultivate its agricultural and industrial potential. India, on the man power side, has more population than enough, a population already nearing four hundred millions and increasing at the rate of six millions a year.

Despite her indigent masses, India paradoxically is one of the world's richest countries. She moves to her free estate with virtually no burden of foreign debt and with credits totalling £1,000,000,000 due from Great Britain.

This vast sum is mainly owing for war services. However much the war impoverished Britain, it transformed India from a debtor into a creditor nation and saw her industrialists, financiers and merchants pile up, or add to, immense fortunes. All of which makes it more than a little odd to find in the latest Congress Party Independence Day pledge the assertion that: "The British Government in India has not only deprived the Indian people of their freedom, but has based itself on the exploitation of the masses, and has ruined India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually."

The extent of the "economic ruin" inflicted by Britain on India may be judged from the indisputable fact, attested by Indian writers themselves, that although India's industrial development is of fairly recent date, the country has made remarkable progress and is to-day among the first eight in the list of industrial nations. This rapid development arises both from British enterprise and the variety and extent of India's natural resources, which rival those of the United States and Soviet Russia.

India's mineral resources include one of the largest iron-ore fields in the world. The ore deposits are estimated at three

thousand million tons, with upwards of a 60 per cent. iron content. India is equally well endowed with coal, the prime essential of heavy industry. The estimated coal resources are sixty thousand million tons, admittedly not of the highest grade, but good enough for most industries and frequently found in seams a hundred feet wide. India also possesses huge supplies of manganese and vast deposits of other essential minerals, such as chromite, copper ore and mica. Her bauxite deposits total about 50 per cent. of the world's known supplies. In Travancore are deposits of thorium, which has atomic uses.

To date, India's oil resources remain unassessed, but producing wells exist in Assam and the Punjab, the latest find being made in the latter province in 1945. More extensive but untapped petroleum supplies are believed to exist in Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier Province.

Another source of industrial power is hydro-electric energy. Here again India is potentially well-endowed, ranking second only to the United States. It is estimated that India could harness thirty-nine million horse-power of hydro-electric energy; only about one-fiftieth is at present drawn upon.

The largest unit operating is the quarter of a million horse-power plant which provides electricity for the mills and transport services of Bombay. The second largest is the Mysore hydro-electric works, which obtains its energy from the falls of the Cauvery River in south India and supplies the current for the famous Kolar goldfields. Both these major hydro-electric schemes are Indian enterprises, the Bombay one being operated by the Parsee Tata family and the other by the independent State of Mysore.

On the agricultural side, India's potential capacity is equally intoxicating to those whose ambitions turn on dominion and power. Despite the 1946 famine in the south and central parts, India ranks among the world's leading primary producers.

Even with bullock and wooden plough methods she produces an immense tonnage of wheat, rice, cotton, jute, silk, oil seeds, hemp, tobacco, sugar, tea, coffee and other commodities.

India is the world's second biggest cotton producer, with an output of about seven and a half million bales and holds a near monopoly in jute production, with an average of nine million bales annually.

India also stands in the front rank of tobacco producers, having something like one and a half million acres cropping nearly that number of pounds. With more than four million acres under sugar cane, producing just under one and a half million tons annually, India can surpass any other country as a sugar grower.

In this series of world firsts, India, "ruined economically" according to the Congress Party, is the leading producer of hides and skins and finds in her vast forests a limitless supply of the materials required for leather tanning.

With all the uncertainty of the monsoon, on which agriculture in the south and centre depends, and in spite of primeval methods of cultivation and the non-use of fertilisers, India is able to hold a place in the front line of food producers. Her primary production capacity, given wider irrigation and water conservation, together with machine-age methods of cultivation and the application of superphosphates to her weary overworked soil is something astronomical. With her abundance of labour and the adoption of the Soviet collective-farming methods, India could, if she chose, glut and undersell world primary produce markets at will. Instead, front-rank food producer India is also a major food importer.

The reason for this is largely that existing cultivation methods are so primitive that the yield per acre is only one-third of that obtained in other countries. Further, more than 30 per cent. of the cultivable area of India is not under crops.

There is also the subtracting fact that increased production of food ultimately effects little improvement in the standard of living, since the population quickly multiplies under these favourable conditions. In the pre-British days war, pestilence and famine were constantly active in keeping down the numbers for which the land had to provide sustenance. Under British administration war and famine have been largely negative as active influences, while deaths from pestilence have been considerably reduced. The result is a steadily growing pressure on the land, a pressure which increases by above fifty millions each decade.

The answer to this problem is agrarian reform of the widest nature—so wide and revolutionary that enacting it may well split India from top to bottom and shatter the dream of the inner coterie of India uber Asia.

There you have one of the differences between the potential and the practicable. India has the potential agricultural and industrial resources to materialise her ambitions, but there are numerous stumbling blocks, apart from the purely agrarian, in the way of exploiting that potential.

In the recent past it has been possible for the self-appointed shapers of India's destiny to slither round these obstacles by putting up Britain as a hare for the hungry Indian pack to chase. Now deprived of that quarry another may be sought, just as Hitler kept the eyes of the bemused Germans glaring beyond their national frontiers that they might not see what was going on under their very noses.

A people that can readily be persuaded that the British by building, among other things, 45,000 miles of railway, maintaining 75,000 miles of canals, irrigating 75 per cent. of the waterless Sind and transforming India by war purchases from a debtor to a major creditor nation, has economically ruined the country, can just as readily be made to believe that an ample supply of rice depends on India assuming paramountcy over Burma and Siam.

CHAPTER 4.

During the war great play was made of the phrase "India, the arsenal of the East." It was much used in propaganda broadcasts directed to the western as well as the eastern end of the Axis. It contained more truth than most propaganda phrases. Apart from Australia and, to a lesser extent, New Zealand, India was the only place east of Suez in any way equipped for the manufacture of munitions.

Two and a half million men were enlisted in India without resort to conscription, but much greater than this contribution to Allied needs was India's economic effort.

It has been remarked that Indian industry is a modern growth; indeed, the famous Tata Iron and Steel Company, which is now the largest steelworks in the British Commonwealth, was not founded until 1907.

The spread of World War I to the Middle East gave the first real impetus to Indian industrial expansion. Various war materials were manufactured for the army in Mesopotamia and rifles and small arms ammunition, as well as some types of shells, were turned out in Government factories, but when that war ended in 1918 it could hardly be fairly claimed that India had an armaments industry.

However, the potentialities as well as the deficiencies of Indian industry were clearly revealed, so that when war broke out again in 1939 the country was at least partially equipped to meet the new demand. The Tata Company, for instance, increased its output of pig-iron threefold and did the same with finished steel. In 1919 there were but three thousand factories worthy of the name in India; in 1939 there were ten thousand, of which seventeen hundred could be classed as large industrial establishments.

While remaining predominantly an agricultural country, with 72 out of every 100 of the population depending for his livelihood on the land, India during the war performed such

prodigies of industrialisation that she was making 45,000 out of the 60,000 articles required by modern fighting forces. With reasonable success Indians tried their skill at 25-pounder field pieces and 6-inch howitzers, various types of anti-aircraft guns, light automatic weapons, heavy armour plating, armoured fighting vehicles, land and sea mines, depth charges and finally aeroplane building. Although internal combustion engines continued to be imported, the first Indian-built aircraft was test-flown in August, 1941. It was a Curtiss Hawk type assembled under American guidance.

Some exceedingly rude and bitter things were said of certain Indian war manufactures and undoubtedly there was a staggering amount of waste and often a considerable degree of error, but much of this is unavoidable in the establishment of new industries under the remorseless pressure of war. In India there were the added difficulties of obtaining sufficient skilled craftsmen and of imported technicians overcoming the language problem.

Yet nothing that went wrong at any stage dimmed the bright vision of Indian industrialists of the future possibilities. The war ended with them plunging on to the conquest of new fields. While they supplied political parties with funds for the "Quit India" campaign, the industrialists air-mailed advertisements to the leading British papers calling for industrial chemists, engineers and technicians of all descriptions. Fat salaries and favourable contracts were dangled as bait. Both British and American motor manufacturers were invited to build complete units in India and plans were laid for making the Hindustan Aircraft Factory something more than a mere assembly plant. Internal combustion engines and chemical factories being essentials of a Great Power, new India was firmly determined to produce these under her own label.

So eager is India to acquire all the accessories of Power that a delegation of top industrialists who toured Britain and the United States in the latter part of 1945, found it necessary in

their report to issue a warning against being in a hurry to purchase capital equipment in the present conditions, unless the need were very urgent. The report warned that, although a certain amount of second-hand equipment was available, this material was either obsolete or worn out. India, if the industrial wise men could avoid it, was not going to make her bid on anything but the newest and most up-to-date equipment.

The delegation, which included Mr. J. R. D. Tata and Mr. G. B. Birla—names to conjure with in industrial India—suggested that India should unhesitatingly, for her speedy industrialisation, seek and import ready-made technique and industrial "know how" from the United States, Britain and other countries. A number of American and British firms, the delegation added, were willing to afford India the necessary facilities and financial participation and, furthermore, were agreeable to effective control, ownership and management of the new or expanded enterprises remaining in Indian hands.

Whichever way you look at it, the race is on so far as those in India who have the wealth, initiative and energy are concerned, and the accent is on industrialisation. The much publicised Bombay Plan of 1944 was mainly the product of industrial minds, including those of the Tatas and Birlas. This Plan envisaged three five-year stages, alike in some respects to the five-year plans which metamorphosed Soviet Russia from a sprawling agrarian into a militant industrial nation.

The Bombay Plan touched reform of the primary but concentrated on the secondary industries. It appeared in two parts and, from an Indian journalist colleague of mine, evoked two comments. On reading Part I he exclaimed: "It is what we wanted. Never again can you British assert that we haven't a plan for India when we have got rid of you." After reading Part II, which was published some time later, he said disgustedly: "What is this thing? It is just a scheme for the

millionaires to gather themselves more cheap labour and lure villagers from their fields into factories and slums."

Neither comment was balanced or just. This was not so surprising since Indians seem to lack the critical faculty as Europeans understand it. The point was that this Indian journalist, a very highly educated man, had missed the whole purpose of the Plan. Large numbers of peasants might indeed be lured into factories where, even though they received more money, they would live in slummish surroundings and become virtual slaves to a machine. Such a state, if history means anything, appears to be an inevitable corollary of industrial upsurge. It is only when industrialisation has become national and the workers develop their own organisation that, by conference or coercion, they can materially improve their lot.

The Bombay Plan had in mind, in my view at least, the equipping of India to capture the markets formerly held by Japan. For the most part these were the cheap markets which could be gained and held only with low operating costs which, in turn, means cheap raw materials and very cheap labour. The hundreds of millions in the East may only spend farthings where the West spends pounds and shillings, but in the aggregate the Asiatic market is a great prize.

Prior to 1914, Germany was the cheapjack in the East and, by selling mass-produced articles manufactured down to a price rather than up to a quality, acquired the war chest with which she made her first bid for supremacy. When Germany went down in defeat and lost this market, Japan, with a policy of long hours, low wages and meagre diet, succeeded to it. Up to World War II, Japan could undersell the world, Indian manufacturers included, in India.

To-day the great Asiatic market, stretching from Egypt, through the Arab countries, across India to Burma, Malaya, Siam, Indonesia, Borneo and up to Indo-China and even China itself, is open for bidding. Britain, the United States, France,

Holland and Australia will compete for the cream, but industrialising India confidently expects to secure the vast bulk of it. This market, incidentally, goes beyond Asia and takes in the important middle section of Africa.

The textile trade alone is of immense proportions, but it seems unlikely that Lancashire can ever regain its old position. Textile manufacture in India has boomed to fabulous proportions. Quite apart from war contracts, new markets for Indian textiles were established in Australia and the Middle East, and India entered the Abyssinian market which formerly was practically entirely Japanese.

Not only is India going to exert herself to hold these markets; she is economicaly better able than anyone else to do so. In 1945, India had four hundred cotton mills and, under war contracts alone was turning out eight million garments monthly for the army. Civilian requirements of the Indian masses were being met at the same time.

Textiles may be a special case, but it isn't a solitary one. Nor is it entirely a matter of dumping low quality cloth. India has long excelled in textile manufacture and some of her old hand-loom stuffs were superlative. Up to the end of the 18th century, India was exporting cotton goods to Britain and the Continent. Calico, of course, gets its name from Calicut, a port on the Malabar coast, while muslin, too, derives from an Eastern word. The weavers at Dacca in Bengal produced a 36-inch muslin that could be passed through a wedding ring and very fine Indian silks have long been known, although formerly they were not intended to complete with the Japanese factory article. Now it is different. War-geared Indian industry doesn't wish to change down; it wants only additional machinery and a plentiful supply of fast dyes before wedging the throttle wide open.

To appreciate India's aims and intentions it is necessary to look beyond the confusion and cross-purposes of the moment

and consider what she may attain in five or ten years. Lord Linlithgow, who was Viceroy in the early war years, is reported by Edgar Snow, the American war correspondent, to have remarked: "There won't be a united democratic India for another hundred years." There are very many knowing India well who agree with that estimate, perhaps because there is little evidence that India has any considerable desire for democracy in the Western sense. It is a word much used and misused, but with 80 per cent. of the entire population illiterate and the educated moneyed classes fondly wearing the magnifying spectacles proffered by the industrial magnates, there is plenty of room for doubt about government for, by and of the people becoming the main objective.

The probable course will be for the industrialists first to secure the home market by the erection of a tariff wall designed to keep out or heavily restrict all but the equipment needed for the furtherance of the industrialisation plan. Retaliatory tariffs should not occasion much concern as India, by keeping a tight hand on production costs, can continue to trade overseas at a profit just as Japan did. Economic pressure in India is such that most of the people seek only security of employment; where radicals demand higher pay they can be replaced by hungrier and thus more amenable workers.

Under their Bombay Plan the industrialists are confident of being able to assure at least fifteen years continuity of employment and, at the end of that period, if calculations are not astray, India should be economically and industrially a giant. The "obligations of national security" being what they are in this so peaceful world, it may be that this giant will then be residing in an arsenal that won't need even a touch of propaganda to heighten its impressiveness.

CHAPTER 5.

A reading of the future which indicates new India as certainly assertive and probably agressive, may occasion reactions varying from dismay to disbelief, ridicule to horror. It all depends on whence one's notions and impressions of India have been gained. India has been described as a colourful land; certainly it is one of many coloured propagandas. There is the propaganda of a benign, cultured ancient land in which the accent is on the spiritual and mystic rather than the material; of a land of ascetics who wish only to be left undisturbed to their religious contemplations, to their beds of spikes on which spiritual merit is acquired through mortification of the flesh. There is the propaganda that India has been shackled, betrayed and deprived by British conquest and exploitation; the propaganda that social, political and economic advancement of the poverty-striken masses is contingent solely on constitutional independence, and the other propaganda that the *real* India is loving and loyal to the British and shudders at the thought of being tossed to the mercy of Congress-wallahs.

There is as much shrewness as cynicism in the assertion that truth is relative. All the propagandas about India are relatively true, just as most of them are equally relatively false.

The Congress-adhering Indian student in London, discussing affairs on terms of nicely calculated deferential equality will show you one India; the quaintly clad, bird-like, inextricably contradictory Gandhi will show you a more complex version; Joshi, the able inteligent Communist, yet another, and a retired Punjabi subadar-major a still different India. The first will convince you that, but for British repression and duplicity, India already would be a great democratic nation, the last that British incorruption alone permits a man to enjoy the rewards of his service and the fruits of his labour.

In attempting to steer a passage through these cross-currents it is advisable to bear in mind that Indian nationalism is a

comparatively recent phenomenon as well as being revolutionary. Revolutionary movements, whether violent or non-violent, usually prove to be intellectual minority movements which, when they have succeeded in infusing the masses, are themselves subject to internal revolution, ultimately resulting in the displacement of the protestant intellectuals by conservative elements possessing a hard core of imperialism.

How many revolutions which succeed on the cry of "Freedom from Oppression" so soon proceed to interfere with the liberty of others ! The France of Napoleon, the Italy of Mussolini, the Germany of Hitler and the Russia of Stalin are all, in their own way, examples of this tendency. The Revolutionary State, in the hangover of hysteria occasioned by its struggle for power, seeks assurance of its security in the extension of military or political domination beyond its national borders. Foreign policy, framed as it is in the fundamentals of geography and economics, becomes jet-propelled.

Of necessity, internal policy must be shaped to subserve external policy; it is only the pace and weight of the latter that can be affected by the domestic programme or ideology of the party in power. As this has proved true of Russia, so it must of an India stepping newly garbed on to the world stage.

Revolutionary India is a product of the 20th century, mainly urban in character and with its growth encouraged largely by the awakening of industrial consciousness. While its intellectual parents were concerned primarily with administrative ambitions, their influence was inconsiderable. The great mass of population felt itself unconcerned with the colour of the Raj. Governments being tax-gathering bodies, the best sort of government was that which imposed the lightest burdens, restrained the rapacity of landlords and maintained law and order without favour or distinction. Under the British there was peace and security, if not plenty, and it was not necessary to pay a bribe to the white administrator to obtain consideration of a petition.

Even the now so militant Congress Party, when formed in 1885 by a group of Indians and Englishmen under the leadership of Alan Octavian Hume, a retired civil servant, had as its objects the consolidation of Indo-British unity and the regeneration of the moral, mental and political life of India. Not until 1916, when Congress was captured by the anti-British Mahratta, B. G. Tilak, did Home Rule become a primary object. It is worthy of note that Indian industrialism was then beginning to take shape, but Congress remained with little influence on the masses and, apparently, little concern for them. The spread of political consciousness on a broader basis was the work of Gandhi, who did not come on the scene until after World War I.

Gandhi gained his ascendance over the minds of the Indian masses by his advocacy of the virtues of the spinning wheel and village industries. As there are seven hundred thousand villages in India and three hundred and fifty millions of her people live in them, Gandhi knew what he was about when he elected himself their spokesman and interpreter. By identifying himself with the peasants he identified the peasants with nationalism, though he obtained the funds for his nationalistic campaign from industrialists who, with their money invested in cotton mills and other mass production factories, could hardly favour a return to the village hand loom.

While the Indian bourgeoisie have subsidised policies against their own industrial interests and Gandhi has wept for the sorrows of the under-privileged, some of those he has taken under his wing have not been above describing him as a "paralysing and disrupting influence." The Congress Socialists disagree with Gandhi on a number of issues. The Communist Party, which was also an intra-Congress organisation, actually defied the 1942 mass civil disobedience campaign and became heretics by actively supporting the British war effort. The Radical Democratic Party, founded by M. N. Roy, formerly a committeeman of the Third International, likewise

strongly opposed Gandhi's "spiritualising" of Indian politics. The Kisan (peasant) Party, whose platform is agrarian reform and therefore anti-landlord, can also be numbered among the dissentients. The Akali Party (Sikhs) split on the war issue, the more influential section rejecting the Gandhian non-co-operation call. The leader of the 60,000,000 Untouchables, Dr. Ambedkar, is bitterly anti-Gandhi.

Prominent among the financial backers of the Congress Party guided by Gandhi have been the magnates magnum of Bombay and Calcutta—the Tata family, the Birla Brothers and Walchand Jirachand, the top figure in Indian shipping. Hundreds of lesser but still very wealthy men have also contributed. Some have even taken an active part in civil disobedience demonstrations, such as sitting on tram or train lines to bring traffic to a standstill. Yet, during the early 1946 Indian naval mutiny, rioting Bombay crowds attacked and looted the mills, shops and offices of wealthy Congress supporters and, in consequence received a condemnatory broadside from Gandhi himself.

There is more evidence than this of division and disunity in Congress. The different sections have different aims. The intellectuals see full self-government and transfer of administration as the prize; the radicals see in self-government the way to immediate social and economic betterment of the masses; the industrialists are intent on control and direction of self-rule once attained.

The ways of the industrialists were glaringly illuminated by the 1942 struggle. With the rejection of the Cripps offer of post-war Dominion status in return for full war co-operation, Congress, at Gandhi's behest, issued a call for open rebellion (non-violent). The Moslem League and other Moslem parties stood aside and Congress itself was divided, some sections abstaining from action. With the leaders promptly interned by the British and with this disunity in the ranks, the revolt

was foredoomed. Hardly a million of India's four hundred millions answered the call.

It was in this politically bankrupt situation that the industrialists, then making huge profits from war contracts, decided to intervene. Lock-outs were staged, with employers paying a bonus to key-workers to enable them to strike. T. A. Raman, a most reputable Indian writer, cautiously admits that some, at least, of the strikes seem to have been in the nature of lock-outs and adds, "it is not yet clear just how many of the industrialists thus contributed to the trouble."

At Ahmedabad, the cotton centre of India, ninety per cent. of the strikers wanted to return after two days, only to be told by the management that key-men were not available to restart the mills. And a strange thing happened at the Tata Steelworks at Jamshedpur in Bihar. Just before Gandhi was interned the management paid its thirty thousand employees three months' wages as a bonus. Although the Tata labour policy is the most advanced in India and no grievance was apparent, the steelworkers promptly struck, causing a loss to war production of about three hundred thousand tons of steel.

It was in Bihar and Bengal—the areas nearest the Japanese advancing through Burma—that most of the incidents occurred. Sabotage was directed solely against rail, road and telegraphic communications and Government stores. For weeks these two provinces were virtually isolated from the rest of India. Quite obviously a considerable fifth column was at work. In addition, Subhas Chandra Bose, former Congress president, was with the Japanese in the role of head of a provisional Indian National Government and commander of the Indian National Army.

The industrialists who subsidised strikes to hamper war production at so critical a moment may have been seeking merely to produce a situation in which the British administration, thus hamstrung, must perforce hand over authority to a

Congress-nominated government. However, many on the spot believed that the intention was to sell out India to the Japanese. If this seems fantastic, it must be recalled that a great many people in the East regarded Britain as being in the process of utter expulsion from Asia. In that event the industrialists had more to gain from co-operating with an incoming conqueror than supporting an outgoing and if, in the long run, Japan were defeated the industrialists would have virtual control of India regardless of its form of administration.

To accept this as being in the minds of the Indian industrialists is not to paint them as double-dyed villains. They felt, and still feel, they owed no particular loyalty to Britain. Admittedly their great fortunes had been built up under British administration (in spite of it, some maintain), but they regarded themselves as being under foreign rule. It has been said to me: "Japanese imperialism or British; what's the difference? Yes, of course, one is white and one is brown, but at least under the brown there would be no colour discrimination."

We strike this attitude with uncomfortable frequency. Mr. Jinnah, Jawaharlal Nehru, besides Gandhi and a number of people who have had English educations, and many who have received English honours and titles, all say, though more grammatically than the Americans, "get the hell out of here." This may seem the essence of ingratitude, but the fault is really the English inability to understand how people who speak our language, meet us socially and have the benefit of our institutions and experience, could possibly dislike us.

Whatever to-day's India is, the good, the bad and the indifferent, it is British made. So far as there is any unity it arises out of the British concept of a United India under a central administration. So far as Indians from the different parts of the sub-continent can freely converse and exchange ideas, they do so mainly in the English language which was made the medium of post-primary education as far back as

1835. It is from the association with the British that come the current ideas of self-responsibility, of trade union organisation, justice and legislation, the reshaping of agriculture and commerce, of medical and social services, yes, and the industrialisation which now competes with our own mills and factories.

Wherever Britain has given a lead, even where she has but indicated an opening, India's industrial and commercial classes have followed or explored. Her politicians and thinkers have absorbed our wisdom and ideals and used them as sharp weapons to hack their way forward. But what Britain has been content to leave, or disinclined to interfere with, Indians have allowed to remain.

Anti-social practices, reprehensible religious customs, corruption, archaic agricultural methods, the evils of the zemindari (landlord) system, the lack of a public conscience—these continue only because the British failed to revolutionise Indian life.

Indeed, Indians have told me that the "failure" of British rule was that, in maintaining law and order, it protected the country from the internal upheavals which, by now, would have swept away much of the objectionable and evil in the social structure.

CHAPTER 6.

Seated with a group of young Indians some months ago on a weather-and-battle-worn turret of the Ferozshah Kotla, the fortress-enclosed palace of one of the many invaders who long ago set himself up as King of Delhi, I raised the question of independent India's external policy.

"Let us first," suggested a brilliant Brahmin from Madras, "settle an internal policy."

"But internal policy is at the dictate of the external."

The Sikh, whose soft brown eyes and feminine mouth had prompted a New Zealand journalist to describe him as "Merle Oberon with a beard," twitched irritably.

"How can we have any sort of policy while you damned British keep us in barbed-wire leading strings!"

The Moslem steno-typist from the north-west frontier glanced a quick smile in my direction and accompanied it with a slight upward motion of his right hand to disassociate himself from the Sikh's rudeness. The Brahmin grinned provocatively. These three had taken me to the kotla to study the wide view of the plain across the Jumna river and also because, in March, the gardens about the mausoleums and decaying fortresses of bygone Delhis are the only places where one escapes the squalor and dust of the Indian city.

As to Singh the Sikh, he was confident I should not resent his damning of the British. That was part of his stock in trade as an ardent supporter of the Congress brand of nationalism. He was always hoping to evoke resentment or rebuke so that he might cry "suppression of free speech," but at the same time was oddly flattered by the admission of man-to-man equality implicit in a failure to draw fire.

"What was your policy before we put you in leading strings?" I asked Singh.

"Our policy?"

"Well, your Khalsa's and, of course, Ranjit Singh's."

The Sikh smiled the condescending smile of the Sikhs. "You have read history."

"And find that, as far as the Sikhs were concerned, communal or religious security required a war against the Moslems and extension of Sikh rule from the Punjab north and west as far as Kashmir and Peshawar. And I find that subsequently this forward external policy twice brought you into the British zone, in spite of the treaty of non-aggression Ranjit Singh had made."

The Brahmin grinned wickedly and the Moslem from the frontier stared coldly at Singh, remembering the undying hostility between their two communities.

"We kept the treaty while Ranjit was alive. Afterwards the Sikhs decided that the British were becoming too powerful in northern India. It was obvious that before long you would reach out again." Singh shrugged delicately. "Just the English lust of conquest, of course."

"And it was Sikh assistance that brought the conquest of India to completion," put in the Brahmin.

Singh struck his turbaned head in contrition. "Our part in the Mutiny? That was something for which the Sikhs deserve never to be forgiven."

The Moslem smoothly suggested that Singh might throw himself over the battlements of the kotla if he found the shame of the Sikhs insupportable.

I plunged deeper into the matter of India's internal and external policies, instancing the influence of geographical features on the political, social and economic development of nations.

In the case of India, the Himalayan massif to the north of the rich agricultural Punjab had safeguarded the country from

penetration by any considerable force from that direction. The great desert tracts stretching southward from Delhi to Kathiwar had generally deterred invasions along that line. To the west, however, the several low gaps and narrow gorges through the unformidable mass of hills provided routes which, over countless centuries, had formed the highways for commercial or warlike enterprise. Probably this was the way the first Aryan or Indid invaders came into India five thousand years ago.

I turned to Singh again. "Before the British put you in those barbed-wire leading strings there were thirty invasions of India. . . ."

"And another since, but from the east," he interjected triumphantly.

"The Japanese incursion?" I laughed. "It's just as well for India that the Sikhs helped to prevent it from becoming anything more. But it shows you, it can happen nowadays from more than one direction, so you had better frame a solid policy for your coming independent State."

The Brahmin suggested that the Indo-British treaty which must form part of the handing over arrangements surely would cover the question of defence. "And if you concede us Pakistan, you must guarantee our borders," put in the Moslem.

"And Pakistan means that someone has to guarantee Sikh security in the Punjab," declared Singh.

"Off we go again, round and round the mulberry bush," I jeered. "But, quite seriously, put communal politics away for a moment and look at the thing realistically. Singh said a little while ago that India couldn't have any sort of policy until independence had been attained. Doesn't that ignore history!"

When the long, fierce and involved discussion thus provoked sorted itself out, it summed itself up something after this fashion :

Before the British unified India under a central administration and thus made external policy something applicable on and beyond the sub-continental frontiers—by sea or land—external policy had operated within India itself, involving the relations between the various kingdoms and principalities contained within that great land triangle which is as large as Europe, excluding Russia.

Prior to the establishment of the Indian Empire under the proclamation of Queen Victoria in 1858, no ruler had succeeded in extending his dominion over the entire country, though many had tried.

Twenty-three centuries ago Chandragupta, by warfare, spread his empire from Bengal north-west to Kandahar and his grandson, the great Asoka, inherited a domain which stretched from Afghanistan over most of India, except the extreme southern portion.

Asoka spent the first years of his reign in the conquest of Kalinga (nowadays the province of Bihar), but thereafter renounced war as an instrument of national policy, though his frontiers remained troublesome. Asoka became a Buddhist and sent cultural missions to Ceylon, Burma, Siam, Tibet and Japan. Sixty years after Asoka's death his great empire (larger in wealth, size and population than that of Rome at its zenith) fell to pieces.

Invasions by Bactrians, Parthians and Scythians followed at different periods and numerous kingships were set up. So it continued right down to A.D. 320 when there emerged the Gupta Empire which, for one hundred and fifty years, maintained its hold on most of northern India. This period is generally referred to as Hinduism's "Golden Age." However, in the seventh century the Gupta Empire fell to pieces under the challenge of powerful groupings to the south and north, and once again the idea of political hegemony over all India gave way to that of independent monarchies.

The next 100 years is a repetition of earlier invasions and incursions, this time by fierce tribes from Central Asia, lumped together by Indian historians under the general name of Huns.

In the eighth century, however, another attempt was made at setting up an empire over a wide belt covering the great Ganges plain and extending west to the Kathiawar peninsula. It was a sixteen year old lad named Harsha who made the bid. In six years of conquest his war elephants were never unsaddled, nor his troops given home leave. Even the aggressive Harsha failed to bring the south Indian peninsula under his sway and after fifty years or so disintegration again set in.

For the next six centuries India's history was a succession of raids, rapine, looting and bloody confusion until a military genius named Baber, descendant of Genghis Khan, came in from the north and imposed political unity on the territories as he conquered them. This task was completed by Akbar, his grandson, who established himself as emperor of India from the Indus in the west to the Ganges delta in the east and from the Himalayas in the north to the Vindhyas in the south.

Akbar, the Moslem, abolished discrimination against the Hindus, married a Rajput princess and had debates at his court between Brahmin scholars, Moslem divines and Jesuit priests. He even evolved a new basic religion intended to overcome Hindu-Moslem differences. This was a complete failure, but none the less, Akbar, a contemporary of Elizabeth of England, has the truest title to greatness among all Indian rulers.

There was not much of Akbar in his successors. Shah Jehan is chiefly remembered as the builder of the costly Taj Mahal and his sons for their treachery, intolerance and homicide. When Aurangzeb died in 1707 the great Moghul Empire, which, at its height, fell just short of including all India, virtually died with him. The Mahrattas under Sivaji seized and held a good part of the land, but generally India was the prey

of robber barons and remained so until the British established the first and only all-India empire.

And having traversed the history of a sub-continent in which every effort at unity led only to division, race and religious antagonisms and ultimately disintegration, the four of us were compelled by swift-falling night to end our debate on the high turrets of the Ferozshah kotla.

"So much talk, but so little decided," the Brahmin remarked sadly, as we moved to recover our bicycles.

"That's merely typical of Indians," the Sikh declared bitterly.

"At least the discussion has shown that Moslems and Hindus must remain separate identities," put in the Moslem. "Nobody," he added, "could have been more tolerant than Akbar. Why, he was even prepared to abandon his own faith in order to resolve the religious issue."

Before Brahmin and Sikh could combine against him, I suggested that the essential point had been missed. After all, it had set out to be a discussion of policy, internal and external. The Asokan and Gupta empires it seemed, had fallen because they failed to clear and control their approaches; the Moghul empire had dissolved through its preoccupation with personal and domestic problems, and that of Harsha because it was an empire of the ruthless sword rather than of commerce and industry.

"That is altogether too sweeping," the three protested, with Singh adding, "and quite in keeping with the English bania (shopkeeping) complex."

Conceding this might be so, I urged that the seeds of decay of the bygone empires might still be found in the lack of comprehensive policies for spreading wealth and extending influence through economic and commercial development.

"But considerable external trade was carried on by both empires," the Brahmin reminded me.

"Admittedly, but was imperial policy based on trade and development? Isn't it the case that trade was permitted, rather than encouraged? Mustn't the levying of arbitrary tribute on provinces and principalities by a central administration always have a stultifying effect? Where is the incentive to commercial expansion when prosperity means only increased exactions for the privy purse without representation or appeal? Where is the urge to seek profit in external trade without either the safeguard of commercial treaties or security of caravan routes? Pre-British India, as I read its history, was something everyone around it sought to tear apart, a storehouse to be looted instead of a co-operative concern whose preservation offered the best dividends."

"Ah, the divine, disinterested British; how shall we survive without them?" mocked Singh.

"Perhaps they will leave us a packet of infallible policy under the counter," suggested the Brahmin, whose shafts were usually tipped with mischief.

And there the Ferozshah kotla interlude ended, since the three declined the hospitality of the hostel in which I lived. The Moslem's religion forbade him to drink, the Sikh's to smoke and the Brahmin's to eat what I had to offer.

CHAPTER 7.

"It's really remarkable how many people can't get a breath of freedom if there's an Englishman in the vicinity," said a China tobacco man who during the war had served as a political intelligence officer.

We were having a reunion drink together when the offer to evacuate Egypt was broadcast. Without more closely indentifying my companion, I can say that he has had about fifteen years intimate experience of the East, covering Japan, China, Malaya, Burma and India. A modest but not retiring chap, he is a good mixer, a keen student of affairs and a reliable observer of underlying causes.

"Apparently," he amplified, "we suck in all the pure air wherever we go and exhale a vapour noxious to all true patriots. China stifles because there are Englishmen in Shanghai and Hongkong, India is unable to take a deep breath because there are Englishmen in Delhi, and Egypt finds it is not the simoon but the Englishmen on the Canal that makes respiration so difficult."

Eyeing my gin and water with distaste, he added: "Of course, the olfactory organ is not a thing of standardised sensation. To an African negro, at least so I've read, a white man smells like a corpse, while there must be few British-born folk who have not experienced some degree of nausea when in close proximity to coconut-oiled Ceylonese. But the odd thing, yes, the really odd thing, is that this widespread inability to draw breath in the presence of Englishmen threatens to assume lethal proportions only when these Oriental patriots find that, through English agency, liabilities have been transformed into assets."

"And what ought we to do about it?"

"The gentlemanly thing, apparently. Apologise for offending and remove our obnoxious presence."

"Even to the point of eventually removing ourselves from the face of the earth?"

"Surely it is better to perish than pollute! But let's have the other half. I'm booked to go back to Shanghai any day, further to offend the local nostrils."

The tobacco man is now back in China, trying to reconstruct a war-disrupted enterprise of great dimensions and wondering, no doubt, whether some new shift of external policy may not leave him high and dry. But more important than the fate of a likeable cigarette pedlar is the possible effect of British line-of-communication evacuations and readjustments on national policies east of Suez.

It is inconceivable that the decision regarding protection of the Suez Canal could have been dictated purely by political expediency, whatever its critics may say. Strategic changes, except in an extremity, are made only when suitable alternatives offer, for strategy and national economy are interdependent. Internal policy's object must be to foster production and external policy's the policing, by diplomacy or, when all else fails, military pressure, of the pipe-lines of distribution. Internal policy must therefore subserve external policy's ability to promote the relations favourable to exterior marketing of national production.

Regardless of just how far ahead Alfred saw when he decided on a programme of naval construction, British sea-power since the days of Elizabeth has been developed to protect British trade, particularly to the Levant, India and beyond. This trade was important even before the Suez Canal was cut and since has become vital. If this route were blocked, the shortest way to half the world would be denied to us. More than purely British policy is conditioned by Britain's hold on the Middle Eastern sea route.

Hitler made a desperate bid to seize the Suez. His failure, brought about by Montgomery's victory at El Alamein, did more to decide the war than most non-British people realise, or are prepared to admit. Hitler drove on Egypt with the

double object of outflanking the Russians and reaching India to link up with the Japanese moving west from Burma.

The developing Egyptian situation had been in my mind when I raised the question of an independent India's external policy with my Indian colleagues during our excursion to the Ferozshah kotla months ago.

In the first World War, Indian troops went to Egypt because the defence of the Canal was essential to the security of India. An Indian army likewise went to Mesopotamia (Iraq) to guard that line of approach to western India.

In the second World War, Indian formations again were employed in the defence of Egypt and in Iraq and Iran, as well as Eritrea and Abyssinia, with the same object in view. Other Indian troops turned east to garrison Malaya and Hongkong.

The Indian nationalist cry was that these dispositions were made merely in pursuance of British imperialism, of "the traditional British policy of getting others to fight their battles." However, apart from the plain fact that under the existing constitution, India is automatically at war when Britain is at war, and Indian forces therefore under an obligation to serve where directed, the British policy was, in effect, the expansion of the Indian forces for the protection of India. The bulk of them were employed for this purpose.

Even in the nineteenth century Indian forces were included in British expeditions in the Persian Gulf, the Sudan, Abyssinia, China and Burma, partly no doubt because Indian troops were more readily available, but also in consideration of India's interest, actual or potential, in the countries concerned. In the 1870's an Indian force was sent to Malta ready to act with the British in the event of intervention in the Russo-Turkish war. Russia at that time was reaching out towards the Dardanelles and the Persian Gulf. British policy then was designed to keep her from encroaching on Empire lines of

communication and from establishing herself on the avenues of easiest approach to India—these north-western avenues along which invasion had thirty times come.

To help ensure the security of these historic land approaches, the Government of India developed a network of railways over the Punjab and North-West Frontier Province, as well as a number of important roads. When in India as a boy, I came upon roads overgrown with grass, but having a solid metalled foundation, leading north or north-west in the Himalayas and was told they were built when the Russian "scare" was on.

Right up until 1939 India's land defence forces were grouped for rapid deployment along the north-western frontiers. The main training areas and chief depots were also in the north-west. This was considered the vulnerable side, whereas the tangle of mountains, jungle and malarial swamps on the north-eastern side were regarded as a natural deterrent to an invader. Never, in fact, had an army passed that way; those attempting the feat all having perished of disease. Yet, in spite of the wisdom of Solomon, there was something new under the sun—an invasion of India from the east, the side on which, in view of its natural defences, costly military installations had not been erected.

Indian nationalists, however, have consistently criticised all military expenditure under the British administration, claiming that Britain made India pay for the defence of her own selfish interests. On this standpoint they dismissed the Indian Army as a horde of mercenaries, at least they did until defections during the recent war demonstrated the Army, or elements of it, as fruitful soil for nationalist propaganda.

CHAPTER 8.

The injection of politics into the Indian Army may well have consequences as unwanted as unforeseen. It is one thing to inspire nationalistic fervour and another to control and direct it. Already the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Claude Auchinleck, who is persona grata even with the Congress leaders, has found it necessary to issue an appeal the nature of which merits pause for reflection in Indian political circles. If the significance of the appeal needs underlining, it obtains it in the fact that although he was on his way back to India by air, the Commander-in-Chief decided that what he must say could not wait until his arrival in Delhi. On March 28—two days before he reached Karachi from London—General Auchinleck had a message broadcast for him by the Adjutant-General to all officers of the Indian Army. It said :

"Remain disciplined, efficient and loyal to whatever Government may be in power.

"Indian officers, do not cut your own foot with your own mattock. Do not take or connive at any action which may impair the discipline, efficiency or loyalty of the Army to the Government of the day.

"British officers, serve the new India as loyally as in the past. Your Indian comrades have served the present India. It is your duty to your country, and to the Army to which you belong, to pass on to your Indian comrades, who are to follow you, in a spirit of unselfishness and service, all the experience and knowledge that you have gained in the past, so that they may, in their turn, serve the Indian Army as faithfully and truly as you have done.

"Thus may the Indian Army lead the way."

It is conceivable that Sir Claude Auchinleck felt it timely to remind the British officers of the Indian Army that their responsibilities did not end with the initiation of discussions to explore ways and means of transferring authority into Indian hands.

It is not so easy, however, to accept this as the full explanation of a broadcast that could not wait for forty-eight hours. The Indian Army, composed as it is of many races and classes, has held together in the past only because it has been traditionally indifferent to all politics. How it will react to the vicious interplay of Hindu and Moslem party politics is anybody's guess, but it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that the Army, or a section of it, might conceive the idea of taking a hand in the administration. Many from the turbulent north-west retain a medieval belief that bullets are more manly legislative instruments than ballot-boxes.

There are a good number, I admit, who do not concede the possibility of the Indian Army becoming politically active. Among them is an outstanding soldier in the person of General Sir Francis Tuker, chief of the Eastern Indian Command. To a gathering of newspaper men in Calcutta in the middle of March he said this:

"We are going to hand over to you a magnificent weapon—a weapon of the finest tempered steel, a blade that will never turn in your hand. If India is worthy of her army, then she is worthy of everything."

Quite obviously General Tuker was conscious of no fear that his Indian officers would be so unhandy with the mattock as to cut their own foot. But then one would expect a soldier with thirty-two years service in the Indian Army to be full of pride in what he had helped to build and of which he now commanded an important part. Yet it must be remarked that General Auchinleck, who used the old Indian proverb about being careful with mattocks, is another soldier whose association with the Indian Army has been from regimental officer up through the various grades to the supreme appointment.

Although it is true, as General Tuker said, that at least five of the Indian divisions rank high among the fighting forces of the world and at least one ranks among the very best, it is also undeniable that over twenty thousand Indian officers and men,

trained in the highest traditions of the Indian Army, went over to the Japanese in Malaya and Burma and fought as stoutly on the enemy side as they had earlier done on the British. As to this disregard of their voluntary oath of allegiance, the Congress Party claims that they changed sides out of pure love of country, because they desired India to be free of British oppression. Just why those who were placed in positions of authority by the Japanese promptly demonstrated their detestation of oppression by inflicting brutalities and tortures on their subordinate fellows, rivalling the worst cruelties of the notorious Japanese, Congress has not attempted to explain.

Without attempting a history of the Indian Army (many have already been written, some brilliantly, all painstakingly and few ever widely read) I think it may assist an appreciation of the worth and role of the army as an instrument of policy in the new India to scan its origins and development. But first it is necessary to recall how the British came to be in India and what they were seeking. Even to get at the truth of this, one has to dig through layers of propaganda and misrepresentation.

This much is indisputable. England was the only country to enter India without a military show or an urge to conquest. The English appeared on the scene a century after the European first-comers—the Portuguese. The Portuguese established themselves at Goa, near Bombay, with a massacre. Next they offered the local inhabitants the choice of conversion to Christianity or being burned at the stake as heretics. In furtherance of their imperial notions, the Portuguese encouraged their nationals to take Indian women with the object of producing a population both indigenous to India and bound by blood ties to Portugal. Not so surprisingly this policy generated its own resistance and to-day all that remains of Portugal's attempt at colonisation is Goa and two other territorial fragments, the whole totalling less than sixteen hundred square miles.

The French and Dutch were next on the scene and they too

sought to establish themselves by strong-arm methods. It was not until December 31, 1600, that England turned her face East on the authority of a charter to trade with the East Indies granted by Queen Elizabeth. The London merchants who formed the East India Company at first concerned themselves with the spice trade of Indonesia. Their charter specifically stated that licence had been granted to trade only, not to colonise. Attention was turned to India itself only in 1618 when Sir Thomas Roe, England's first ambassador to India, obtained from the Emperor Jehangir permission to establish a "factory" or trading post at Surat on the west coast.

Communicating his success to the East India Company in London the ambassador advised it not to waste money on military adventures like the Portuguese and the Dutch "who seek plantation by the sword." Instead, he urged as a golden rule, "if ye will seek profit, seek it at sea and in quiet trade." For well nigh a century and a half this advice was followed. In the course of their trade development, which aroused no serious antagonism, the English opened additional "factories" at Madras, Bombay and Calcutta and other places. The mud-flats and fishing villages assigned to the English at various points took on an air of substance and, with Indian concurrence, forts were built for the protection both of the trading community and its commercial storehouses. Trade was sufficiently profitable that for thirty years from 1662 the East India Company was able to pay dividends averaging 22 per cent.

While the English were thus doing very well out of following the advice of Sir Thomas Roe, the French, whose own East India Company had been founded in 1604, were determinedly establishing themselves in south India, their chief settlement being at Pondicherry on the east coast. In 1750 the French from Pondicherry marched on and captured Madras, then know as Fort St. David, from the English.

This was the cue for the entrance of one Robert Clive and the Indian Army.

D

CHAPTER 9.

The first Indian Army to serve a European Power was raised by the French, not the English. In 1748 Dupleix enlisted several battalions in south India and armed them in the European fashion. These French Indian troops were Moslems, many of whom had come down from the north seeking employment as soldiers of fortune. The only armed men in the British service at this time were the doorkeepers and watchmen of the East India Company.

Sensing the coming struggle with the French in south India, the English company formed their doorkeepers and watchmen into infantry companies and it was with a detachment of this material that Clive laid the foundation of his military reputation by gaining an important success against the French at a place called Arcot.

In view of the reiterated assertions of present-day Indian nationalists that the British have always sought "to dominate and enslave" India, it is interesting to note that when we first put men under arms it was to resist the imperialistic notions of the French and not to conquer India or any part of it. That the British Indian Army rapidly expanded from its nucleus of watchmen was due to the need of the East India Company in the preservation of its trade and influence to resist French military policy. Even when France became a Republic her policy of trying to oust the English from India continued unabated. There were constant "wars" with the French and with Mysore and the Mahrattas under French influence. Napoleon himself had definite ambitions towards India, and even when the power of the French in India had been broken French officers, as soldiers of fortune, took service with Moslem and Mahratta Princes who found cause for alarm at the sight of the new military might of the English trading company.

There was also something to disturb them in the fact that the troops with whom the English had broken the French and

their Indian allies were not drawn from the accepted martial clans and castes but were low caste and outcaste men who were only too glad to take the field against the high caste races that had oppressed them. Contemporary records show that on European food and under European discipline the humble Untouchable was a match for anyone who came against him. Then, too, because it is good in the East to be on the winning side, many of those who had formerly served the French transferred their allegiance to the British, and to this day the full dress uniform of some of the cavalry regiments is still the light blue of the French of the days of Dupleix.

In the disturbed state of India in the early eighteenth century and with freelances setting themselves up everywhere as local rulers or robber barons, the East India Company had all the provocation or excuse it could require to make plenty of use of its new found military strength. The point was reached where the earlier handsome dividends of the company were swallowed up in military and administrative expenses and even deficits were shown. In 1833 a Charter Act was passed by the British Parliament terminating the trading functions of the East India Company and defining the legislative powers its increasing governing role demanded.

There were now three great but separate presidential armies, one in Madras, another in Bengal and the third in Bombay. These armies fulfilled an essentially imperial purpose. During the Napoleonic wars the reduction of enemy overseas colonies and naval stations was entrusted to them and India became the base for numerous overseas expeditions. Even as early as 1762 Madras troops had taken part in the war with Spain by capturing Manila. The capture of the Mauritius Islands in 1810 was also effected by troops from India. Bengal and Madras troops were included in the British force which captured Java from the Dutch in the following year. Then there was the almost forgotten war with Nepal in 1814 in which the contestants came so much to admire each other that a treaty was made guaranteeing the independence of Nepal in return for which

Gurkhas were allowed to take service with the British and became, to a considerable degree, the elite troops of the modern Indian Army.

Although history records many overseas expeditions and external campaigns as falling to the lot of the Indian troops there were still considerable internal wars to occupy them. A campaign which had much to do with the consolidation of British power in India opened in 1817 with the object of removing the menace to neighbouring territories of the ambitious Mahratta chiefs. A second object was to sweep away the Pindaris. This was the name given to the large and lawless bands of freebooters who established themselves at strategic points and raided the country round about. These enormous bodies of masterless soldiery with their own cavalry and artillery, came from the gradual break-up of the armies of the Moghul Empire and gained reinforcement from Afghan tribesmen, Arabs and other warlike folk who hoped to win fortune by the sword. The horror inspired by the Pindaris has not been forgotten to this day in the villages of central India, where grandmothers threaten naughty children that "the Pindaris will come and get you."

With all but displaced chieftans and extirpated barons British prestige flourished and increased, and service in the Indian Army was looked upon as a desirable career. But while nothing succeeds like success, nothing disrupts so much as failure. By backing a deposed and incompetent ruler of Afghanistan in 1838 the British involved themselves in a four years war which proved disastrous in more ways than one. As it had long been the habit of the Afghans to sweep into India to rape, loot and devastate as occasion offered, the British administration felt it had a good case for intervening to ensure in Afghanistan security and good government. After a winter retreat from Kabul that ended in a massacre, an humiliation the like of which had never been known by the British, the war was brought to a triumphant conclusion, but altogether the bitter taste of lessened prestige remained for many years.

It is agreed by military writers that the mutiny in 1857 had some relation to the Afghan disaster. Pundit Nehru prefers to describe the mutiny as a war of independence. By no stretch of imagination can it rightly be so described. The Indian Mutiny had many and mixed causes, but it had no real political substance and did not extend to the general populace. In fact, it was mostly confined to the army of Bengal and affected the army of Bombay and that of Madras only in a very minor degree. It was not even the first mutiny, merely the biggest. In the years that the Indian Army had been growing, from the early days of Clive, it experienced a number of mutinies. A rapidly expanding military force in the service of a trading company which had strong ideas on the subject of profits was almost bound to experience periods of discontent and sometimes well-founded grievance. In 1806 there had been a serious mutiny at Vellore in south India; in 1824 the Indian troops ordered to the Arakan, across the Bay of Bengal, had refused to go. There was also a mutiny on the part of British officers over the question of field allowance, and after the annexation of the Punjab insubordination over pay and allowances became acutely troublesome.

Since the Indian Army is to be taken over as a going concern there is point in reviewing its past history of reliability or otherwise, particularly in view of Sir Claude Auchinleck's appeal to it to serve loyally whatever government may be in power. If it should seem odd that such an appeal had to be made to an Indian Army on the way to being placed at the disposal of an Indian Government, a reminder is needed that the army of India serves the profession of arms rather than any national cause.

None of the mutinies prior to 1857 was aimed at the overthrow of the British administration then in the process of establishment, and there was no broad national basis for the revolt of that crucial year. Where politics entered into it, they were but the personal and narrow politics of dispossessed local

rulers, of freebooters deprived by the new law and order of their former fine pickings, and of agitators believed to be financed from Russian sources.

So far as one can boil down the many and various causes of the outbreak, they may be summarised thus:—

1. Discontent over the cutting out of field allowances to garrison troops.
2. Loss of discipline and efficiency resulting from the transfer of experienced officers to administrative work in the newly acquired provinces.
3. Loss of prestige due to the Afghan disasters and the severe casualties suffered in the recent Sikh wars.
4. A changed and restrictive recruiting policy.
5. The seditious activities of priests and other individuals whose activities had been, or were likely to be circumscribed under British rule.
6. The issue of cartridges greased with animal fat.

Lumped together the causes seem to-day hardly to add up to a mutiny that in a few weeks extended from Patna to Peshawar. Perhaps a peculiarly Indian explanation of a peculiarly Indian happening accounts for it, one given to me as a boy by an old Indian who lived through it. He was the ancient Rajput guide at the Residency in Lucknow and had stayed loyal to the British through the siege. Wandering with him over the ruins and through the military cemetery guarded by the sacred peacocks, I asked what caused the Mutiny. "*Sahib*," he answered, "*hawa laga*."

A wind blew! Just that. Calm, then a sudden storm and calm again, with only the scattered debris of the Bengal Army to show what had happened. So much for Jawaharlal Nehru's War of Independence !

Of the causes listed, two are of special note. They are (2) and (4). The Indian Army has always been closely attached

to its own regimental officers. Enlisting for pay and pension, its personnel has been largely unconcerned with its employer's politics or policy. Men joined regiments whose commanding officers had a high reputation; thus their loyalty was very much a personal one. When the best officers were increasingly detached for civil or semi-civil duties, the efficiency and discipline of their regiments slackened. Not enough to make a mutiny, perhaps, but sufficiently to prepare the ground for sedition. Then there was the changed recruiting policy. This proved widely and deeply significant.

We have seen how the Indian Army originally depended on casteless Moslem freelances and low caste and outcaste Hindus. Although this material made efficient soldiers the tendency was, as the army grew and the British acquired new territories, to recruit from the higher castes. This tendency developed into a definite policy of confining enlistment only to the "better classes," since to get men of social and religious prejudices to serve it was necessary to exclude the lower orders who had served so faithfully in the past.

It may be argued that Britain would have provoked resistance to her administration had she denied the profitable and honourable profession of arms to India's traditional warrior classes, but contemporary writings suggest that, for one reason or another, some of the higher castes were by no means the best soldiers. In the Bengal Army in particular, the ranks gradually were filled with men of the Rajput and Brahmin clans of Oudh (now the eastern part of the United Provinces) and of Bihar. Being high caste and haughty these Poorbeahs, as they were known, brought with them all manner of social and religious taboos. As a counterweight, the British introduced a considerable number of Moslems and, after the Sikh wars, some Sikhs.

Here then was an experiment at an Indian national army. Rajputs, Brahmins, Moslem and Sikhs from different provinces and, of course, racially different, were mixed up in the ranks

as chance might befall, so that each and every one to some extent lost or modified prejudices and antagonisms and gained in their place some degree of common sentiment.

This was the situation when the greased cartridges appeared on the scene to become the excuse rather than the cause of the mutiny of the Bengal Army. With these new cartridges it was the drill to bite off the top before inserting them in the musket. The agitators, whether serving Russian interests or Indian malcontents, put it around among the Hindu soldiers that the cartridges were greased with cow fat and among the Moslems that pig fat was used. So the mutiny began.

It would please Mr. Jinnah more than it would Pundit Nehru to recall that the mutineers, largely Hindus from Oudh and Bihar, went hotfoot to Delhi to set on the throne the aged and imbecilic Bahudur Shah and proclaim the reincarnation of the Moghul Empire! To add a final touch to the fantasy and discommode present day Indian nationalists, they marched with their British colours flying, their British medals gleaming on their chests and with their bands playing such British tunes as "Cheer, Boys, Cheer" and "Auld Lang Syne."

The anomalies of the Mutiny did not end there. In some of the most honoured regiments the officers were hacked to pieces; in others, great trouble was taken to conduct them to a place of safety. In others again, officers were invited to join the mutineers and continue to lead them. Some regiments mutinied; others in the same vicinity did not; yet others readily joined the fight against the mutineers. The fierce men of the Punjab and the North-West Frontier, only recently and not too securely brought under British control, joined forces with their conquerors, if only with aspirations towards looting the rich cities of Hindustan.

But Nehruan fantasies notwithstanding, the great mass of Indian people in 1857 exhibited no desire to be rid of the

British. The army besieging Delhi, the mutiny centre, never lacked volunteered supplies, transport or services.

Mutinies in the Indian Army did not end with 1857. In France in the late autumn of 1914 there were instances of units refusing to advance against the Germans; in 1915 the 5th Light Infantry, one of the oldest and staunchest of Indian regiments, inexplicably mutinied at Singapore and attacked the city; in 1916 certain Moslem units were removed from Mesopotamia to prevent them deserting en masse to their co-religionists, the Turks; in the recent war there was the notorious switch of allegiance to the Japanese in Burma and Malaya.

It must, however, in all fairness be stated that every instance of failure or unreliability is outmatched by examples of loyalty and self-sacrifice. The point is that the Indian Army can be as inexplicable in its own way as Mr. Gandhi is in his. In six years of war from 1939, it was transformed from a select rifle and animal transport force of one hundred and fifty-seven thousand men to an all-arms, mechanised army of two and a half millions drawn from all castes and classes. Generally speaking its sentiments may still be expressed in the old proverb :

Khalk-i-Khuda
Mulk-i-Sarkar
Hukm-i-Sahiban Alishan.

Mankind belongs to God; the land belongs to the Government, and power to the powerful.

CHAPTER 10.

In the present state of the world, new India will maintain considerable armed forces whether to support UNO obligations, or to give resonance to its voice in world affairs. For all its vaunted policy of non-violence the Congress Party has expressed no intention of disbanding, or materially reducing, the military might built up during the war years by the British administration.

Writing in his own newspaper, "Harijan," Gandhi said this: "What policy the National Government will adopt, I cannot say . . . . I expect that with the existence of so many martial races in India, all of whom will have a voice in the government of the day, the national policy will incline towards militarism of a modified character."

In July, 1942, "Harijan" printed another reference to this question. On that occasion Gandhi wrote: "If India were to listen to me she would give non-violent help to China. But I know that will not be so. Free India would want to be militarist."

The view of the Moslem League on this subject has been stated neither so publicly nor so explicitly, but men from the north-western portion of Mr. Jinnah's Pakistan area are traditionally martially inclined and, since the 1857 Mutiny, have always provided a considerable proportion of the best troops. The Sikhs also make soldiering one of their main activities and assuredly would take a very serious view of any disarmament policy that would deny them a wide avenue of military employment.

Apart from the army, there are now the much enlarged Indian navy and air force to which men of many castes and classes look for a secure job. Both these defence arms are different from the army in more than technique and mission. While the navy is the oldest of the services, tracing its origin back to 1612 when the East India Company's factory at Surat

found it necessary to provide itself with armed vessels as protection against the Portuguese and Dutch, as well as the Bombay coast pirates, it remained little more than a token force up to 1939. When war broke out it could muster no more than four armed sloops, two patrol vessels and about half a dozen minesweeping trawlers, survey and depot ships. At the end of the war the Indian navy had six 1,200-ton sloops, plus frigates, corvettes, a fleet of 850-ton minesweepers and numerous anti-submarine and patrol craft. All these were added during the war and some of them were built in Indian shipyards.

During 1946 it was arranged to transfer from the British to the Indian Navy three 7,000-ton cruisers of the Ajax class. These additions bring the Indian Navy into line with those of Australia, Canada and New Zealand and make it stronger than the British East Indies Squadron.

It therefore seems obvious that there can be little reduction in the number of personnel from the war-time peak of thirty-three thousand. Other considerations apart, an Indian Government may find itself under pressure from its powerful industrial supporters to embark on an even wider naval shipbuilding programme.

Similarly, the Indian Air Force, the newest of the services, is hardly likely to be contracted. It came into being in 1932 as a separate entity on the recommendation of a Commission which included Mr. Jinnah and Pundit Nehru's father. During the war the Indian Air Force raised its numbers to nearly 30,000 and its air-going personnel saw service in Europe, North Africa and South-East Asia. In 1941 a war-plane assembly plant began to function in India and plans are afoot for the complete manufacture of aircraft there.

With both the Indian navy and air force the necessities of war compelled an expansion which proved to some extent unsettling. Men of education, scientific and technical experience had to be taken in irrespective of whether they were

suitable material in other respects. Official citations praise highly the services of the Royal Indian Air Force, but somehow or other cynical and disrespectful members of allied air arms in the Asiatic theatre understood the initials R.I.A.F. to stand for Really Incredible Asiatic Foul-up. Its navigation and bombing were the subject of numerous amazing and, one would hope, apocryphal stories, while its maintenance was reputed to be chancey to the point of suicidal.

The mutiny in the Indian Navy in February, 1946, has been held in some quarters to be partly ascribable to the war intake of a multitude of normally non-seagoing men who failed, either through lack of time or inclination, to absorb its traditions. Be that as it may, the navy and air force by various acts and degrees of insubordination have shown themselves ready to use political and direct actional methods to assert private ends. While it may have suited Indian nationalists to foster and condone service "strikes" and demonstrations under a British administration, precedents have been established in the matter of expressing grievances, real or imaginary, that those now to rule India may have cause to regret.

On balance, the army appears the most reliable of the instruments of defence, not that it has throughout its history by any means a clean sheet, but because it recruits mainly from classes and areas in which the military tradition is strong. But it has to be remembered that up until now the Indian Army has included a proportion of British troops and large numbers of Gurkhas from the independent kingdom of Nepal. The normal ratio in the field army has been one British unit to three Indian. Furthermore, even during the process of Indianisation of the commissioned ranks, the army has been served by thousands of British officers who, for the most part, have been a source of inspiration to it.

According to a fairly recent statement by India's War Secretary thirty-two thousand British officers and one hundred and eighty thousand British other ranks are to be demobilised

from the Indian Army by April 1, 1947. What effect this will have on the army's efficiency is guesswork. To Delhi politicians the important thing is full Indianisation in the shortest possible time.

The Commander-in-Chief assured the Council of State when it met in New Delhi, on April 8, 1946, that it was the intention of the Government of India to create a completely national army, officered and manned throughout by Indians, in the shortest possible time without lowering the standard of efficiency and competence of the Indian Army. General Auchinleck's statement was made prior to the announcement of the Cabinet Mission's plan regarding the future status of India, but it is unlikely that an Indian Government would disown his scheme.

Under full nationalism the Indian Army would require about nine thousand regular officers. Obtaining them is the problem, as General Auchinleck admits. There are some three thousand British and Indian regular officers commissioned prior to the war and one thousand Indians granted temporary commissions have now been accepted as regulars. It is also proposed to set up a special class of officers recruited from Viceroy's Commissioned Officers (super-warrant officers) and Indian warrant officers and N.C.O.'s to fill certain specialised appointments. Thus another one thousand will be added to the fully commissioned ranks, and by April, 1947, it is hoped to get eleven hundred young regular Indian officers from the new post-war course at the Indian Military Academy. Apart from the five thousand one hundred from all these sources, four thousand more Indian officers must come from somewhere.

In General Auchinleck's opinion a lowering of the standard of selection would be necessary to get additional officers from among the Indians granted temporary war-time commissions, and he does not favour doing this. Of the total number of Indian temporary officers applying for regular commissions during 1946 only one-third proved acceptable.

The gap is to be filled by seconding certain British officers, by retaining Indian temporary officers for a period up to five years, and by granting short service commissions to about two thousand other Indians. Meanwhile the Indian Military Academy will be turning out officers and when it is in full operation the new National War Memorial Academy is expected to produce between five hundred and six hundred officers a year for all three services. General Auchinleck has strongly made the point that the Indian Government must insist that the cadets taken into these academies must be of the right stamp. For its first course the Indian Military Academy had twelve hundred and thirty-six applicants, of whom only one hundred and twenty-six were found suitable. The Commander-in-Chief admitted that these figures were not encouraging.

On the figures given it must be assumed that the gap in the commissioned ranks will not be filled with Indian officers for at least ten years after the first cadets emerge from the academies. Probably by that time some of the pre-war Indian regulars will be ready to fill the highest posts and many of the pre-war British officers will have retired or will be on the point of retiring. There is also likely to be, on the one hand, reluctance to spend large sums on defence when there are so many other urgent claims on revenue and, on the other, an urge to keep up a military force capable of providing essential security and fulfilling India's imperial aspirations.

The recent war showed that within the over-all battle efficiency of the Indian Army there were the same degrees of good, bad and indifferent that were apparent in other armies. Some Indian units were exceptional, but the concensus of opinion among the British, Dominion and Allied officers and men with whom I came in contact was that the most consistently good were the Gurkhas. Some set values at one Japanese equalled one Gurkha and one Japanese equalled seven Indians.

Instances were given of Indian ability to command not matching up to Indian bravery. One illustration given me referred to an incident on the Assam frontier at the time of the confused fighting around Imphal and Kohima. With the Japanese appearing unexpectedly on our jungle lines of communication and seeking to isolate forward groups, a very young English lieutenant was given the task of evacuating a headquarters' records and equipment while the formation commander and his staff were away supervising new dispositions. Headquarters escort was provided by an Indian battalion under an Indian commanding officer. When everything essential had been packed and the transport was ready to move, the English subaltern reported to the Indian colonel to have him ask: "What had I better do?"

Were this a lone instance of either disinclination or inability to shoulder sole responsibility, I would not have repeated the story, but I have encountered so many cases in all walks of life of Indians shying away from accountability for vital decisions that the suspicion arises that it may be a characteristic.

So far no Indian has commanded more than a brigade in the field. Nationalists allege that this is explainable by a British determination to reserve the higher appointments for British generals, or by a lack of trust in Indians. One allegation is unworthy, the other insulting to many Indian officers. The explanation can only be that divisional and higher commands have not been awarded simply because serving Indian officers have not been considered sufficiently experienced for such appointments.

Under the new set up, high ranking responsibilities up to and including that of Commander-in-Chief will be taken over, although the indications are that for some time the Indian Government will expect the guidance, advice and experience of senior British operational and administrative staff officers to be available to the Indian armed forces.

Whatever new India does about its other problems, external and internal, its handling of the fighting services will be a test of its vision and true international stature. How these fighting services react to the change of control and the altered circumstances this will involve, will be watched with intense interest by students of military affairs everywhere, particularly by those of nations having interests or ambitions in Asia.

CHAPTER II.

Thus far we have looked upon the facade of the Indian edifice, with its overlayings and ornamentations of high policies and politics, and its industrial and military power. Let us now, in order to make the valuation complete, pass inside and in studying the interior not omit an inspection of the servants' quarters and "other offices."

How very unlike a Fitzpatrick travelogue it is! Can this seething mass and mess of oppression, depression, disease, cruelty, cowardise, filth, hypocrisy and corruption assume the right to a freehold site on the Grand Avenue of Nations? The estate of Democracy is indeed a garbage tip if India is to be admitted to it without a spring cleaning that must extend over more than one season.

And the blame for this noisome state of affairs? Since it has become accepted that the British should be held accountable for everything amiss in India, the fault may be found in the British policy of administering the sub-continent instead of ruling it.

In 1931 the total number of British-born officials in the civilian government service was a mere 12,000 and since then that total has been progressively reduced by the increasing Indianisation of the government.

The main service in India is the Indian Civil Service (I.C.S.), which provides most of the heads of departments in both the Central and Provincial Governments. The I.C.S. now numbers about eleven hundred, of whom only half are British.

The only other all-India services are the Indian Medical Service and the Indian Police, which provides the district and provincial heads of the police. Other main services are Forests, Education, Engineer, Agriculture and Veterinary, these being organised on a provincial basis since British recruitment stopped in 1923.

Even with twelve thousand, or thrice that number of British officials, there could be no effective direct government of the million square miles of British India and its roughly three hundred millions of population. Recognising this, the British confined themselves to putting their own men into key positions and leaving the subordinate detailed work to Indians.

The key to the administration of India has been the district, a unit of five thousand miles, having a population varying between one and three millions under a Collector who, as the title implies, collects the revenue. The Collector also controls the police, oversees rural development and supervises all other local officials. His duties involve exhaustive tours of his district and a vast amount of office work, so that, by and large, he is the person who takes the blame for all that goes wrong, yet has insufficient time, heads, hands and eyes to fulfil his multifarious responsibilities. It is the same with the district superintendent of police, the executive engineer and the civil surgeon; all have so much ground to cover and so much office paper work to do that it is impossible for them to maintain the desired degree of personal contact with all those under their charge. Thus, for the most part, the direct application of administration in British India lies in the hands of Indian subordinates whose efficiency, like that of subordinates everywhere, only more so, is in direct relation to the supervision exercised over them.

A system of this nature obviously is open to many abuses. It can leave the mass of the people under the tyranny of petty officials and allow the latter to stifle or misrepresent petitions and protests. Probably had Britain originally set out to conquer and rule India, government would have become clean and effective at all levels, but we went there for trade and entered the field of administration only when local conditions made intervention necessary to the maintenance of the law and order without which trade cannot be safely carried on.

Even when India was taken over by the British Crown in 1858, Queen Victoria's proclamation clearly stated that there would be no further annexations of territory. Thus five hundred and sixty-two Indian States, representing two-fifths of the entire sub-continent and more than 20 per cent. of the population, remained under their own princely rulers on a treaty basis.

The state of India behind its ornate facade is appalling to inquiring Western eyes. If the British administration is to be excused for failing fully to remedy the situation, the most that can be pleaded in extenuation is that, through much of its association with India, the Government has been compelled to spend on wars of increasing magnitude vast sums that might otherwise have been devoted to improving the standards of life. Less acceptable must be any plea that respect for religious and individual liberty made it impossible, or unwise, to cut across native traditions or to enforce alien, even though to Western notions desirable, social reforms.

Many laws have been passed to remedy evils, but through passive or active resistance they are honoured more in the breach than the observance. As the Aga Khan said: "A foreign Government can get paid servants in India, but it cannot get real helpers."

The city dwellers are no better than the illiterates of India's seven hundred thousand villages, and the higher castes no more civic or hygienically minded than the lower. To come down to cases. In a temporary office building in which I worked the lavatory adjoined the main room in which a number of European men and women and Indian university graduates were employed. The blazing heat necessitated strict obedience to the laws of hygiene to prevent the lavatory becoming an odorous nuisance, but nothing could induce the Indians to operate the flushing system. A chaprassi was stationed at the door to remind all Indians to "pull the chain." This precaution was to no purpose. Any task even remotely connected

with the disposal of excrement was Untouchables' work, and that was that.

Such are the habits of Indians regarding evacuatory human functions that it would barely be an exaggeration to describe the country as one huge public lavatory. In city streets, along any road, and in the parks and gardens, Indians squat to micturate wherever and whenever the mood takes them, quite regardless of passers-by. In Connaught Place itself, the grand circle in New Delhi, most recently built of Indian cities, the emergence of the tropic sun after the first rains brings steaming from the gravelled pavements a mist reeking of stale urine. This is in spite of the provision of public lavatories that, by their obnoxity, require no directional signs.

Civic consciousness is foreign to India. Garbage is thrown into the streets, there to be trampled underfoot by passing crowds, to rot in the sun and be fought over by diseased pariah dogs. Publicity campaigns against this revolting practice fall on deaf ears. One pictorial series illustrating how epidemics arise from using the public highway as a refuse tip, featured a Brahmin housewife as an offender! This was published by an Indian paper.

In Indian cities, except in the European shopping section, there are no glass shopfronts. Perishables of all description are exposed on stalls with no protection against dust and flies. Sacred bulls and cows wander at will, nosing and eating from any dish or tray that takes their fancy. The narrow pavements are foul with bovine droppings and traffic may be brought to a standstill either because one of the sacred animals has decided to flop and doze in the middle of the street, or a couple are copulating.

Cholera is the swiftest of the ever present killer diseases in India and dysentery comes next among the intestinal afflictions, so much so that most Indians are chronic dysenterics. Both cholera and dysentery are fly-borne ills, yet it is all but impossible to persuade Indians to swat flies. At one hill resort,

a friend of mine was asked not to use a fly swatter in the dining room while a Jain parliamentarian was present. The Jain religion forbids the taking of any sort of life, even of plague carrying insects !

The Punjab Government launched an anti-fly campaign in the summer of 1945. In the middle of all the hullaballoo thus occasioned, I passed through the Indian city of Lahore, capital of the Punjab. Hanging in the butchers' shops were carcasses of mutton so thickly covered with flies that they looked like unskinned black Persian lambs.

Wherever one may find himself in India the precaution must be taken of washing fruit in "pink water" (permagnate of potash) before eating it and salads, however much they may be suited to the climate, are fraught with risk of dysentery. To protect British and American troops, hotels and restaurants were forbidden to serve them with uncooked vegetable products during the seasons in which the endemic cholera and dysentery become epidemic. One of the worst cholera epidemics in the recent war occurred in a Calcutta hotel then being used by Allied officers. Eventually it was discovered that one of the Indian kitchen staff was a carrier, the Indian method of cleansing after defecation being no safeguard against communicating bacilli to food subsequently handled.

On one occasion a party of us were taken by a Sikh to a cafe in an Indian city at which the food was specially cooked according to Sikh custom. We were assured it was the only place in the city where the choicest Indian dishes, prepared in the choicest manner, could be obtained. The cafe consisted of tables and benches in a sort of courtyard adjoining some stables. The food was cooked in uncovered pots over an open fire, with dust from the crowded and dirty street blowing over it the whole time. The flies were so bad that small boys were called in to stand behind each diner and essay the hopeless task of fanning the pests away. To cool the mouth after the fiery curry dishes, we were all induced to consume quantities of

lassi, a buttermilk beverage proclaimed as the supreme liquid refreshment. A few days later I read that several people had died from drinking *lassi*, a lizard having died and decomposed in the big copper pot in which the liquid had been set to cool.

In the lovely upland valleys of the Himalayas, where every European who can get leave seeks relief from the furnace-like plains in summer, sparkling rills splash down the mountain-side, singing a siren song to the thirsty hiker. Yet the wary pass them by because, clinging to a ledge on the higher slopes, will be a village whose refuse, human and animal, will certainly have fouled the water. No water is really safe in India, whether in town or courty, that has not been boiled and filtered.

"You can live as long in India as in any other country," pronounced the head of a chemical works who claimed to have resided there twenty-five years without once contracting any of the prevalent intestinal diseases. "It's just a matter of taking reasonable precautions."

He even used soda water of a reputable brand when cleaning his teeth! The carbonic acid gas which gives soda water its sparkle is credited with being fatal to cholera germs. If there really is medical support for this belief, the popular jeers at the *chota peg* of the Poona-wallahs may be a little out of place.

CHAPTER 12.

Is there reasonable ground for an assumption that new India, self-governing and responsible only to its free and unfettered self, will produce an hygenic India?

Well, recommendations to this effect are being made, as so often they have in the past. One of the latest comes from Dr. U. A. Ahmed, health officer of the Indian-controlled Calcutta Corporation. He says: "A great many things will have to be done if we are to bring cholera under complete control. The use of unfiltered water by the people must stop and quicker and better methods of garbage removal must be introduced, and the city must be kept tidy and clean all the twenty-four hours. Municipalities adjoining Calcutta must be armed with sufficient technical skill, finance and other facilities to remove from their midst epidemic-generating eye-sores."

Of these recommendations, an Indian citizen of Calcutta, Mr. A. K. Sarkar, wrote to the Press: "While the supply of safe drinking water is necessary, there is also need for vigilance over shops dealing with prepared food which, as displayed, is exposed to contamination by flies."

Mr. Sarkar then adds: "There are sanitary officers and food inspectors for every ward, but these make hardly any systematic attempt to improve the situation." He further alleges that "not all cases of dangerous diseases are notified to the health offices; attending physicians are often great defaulters in this matter."

My own observations, and those of scores of people I can vouch for, more than bear out the worst that can be said on this subject. With hygiene and sanitation so unsatisfactory in a great and wealthy city like Calcutta, it should follow, even to those who have no experience of the East, that in lesser cities and towns the conditions probably are worse.

Edgar Snow, the noted U.S. war correspondent, when trying to understand Indian nationalism on its native heath, paid a

visit to a meeting of the Congress Working Committee at Wardha in the Central Provinces during the crisis of 1942. Of this town, he afterwards wrote: "Wardha had few charms. The water was polluted and you had to drink it purpled with permanganate; there was a cholera epidemic, malaria was widespread, and the sticky, oppressive heat killed many people annually. . . . The chief difference between Wardha and a hair shirt is that the latter is removable."

Nearby is Sevagram, Gandhi's own "model village." Edgar Snow went there too and found it "a cross between a third-rate dude ranch and a refugee camp; a colony of mud huts with thatched roofs set in a cactus-sprinkled, sandy, flat and uninteresting landscape." And there he saw, in a hut approached by a dirt path, Gandhi himself squatting bare-foot on the floor amid "this collection of simple buildings, scrawny chickens and cows; a place infested by scorpions and poisonous snakes."

Gandhi, the great exemplar, has more than once taken time off from superintending the destiny of India to administer a rebuke to his followers for throwing fruit-skins and other germ-breeding litter in the streets, but the thoroughfares remain nauseous. So far, no advice or appeal has served to induce that elementary cleanliness of habit vital to health and welfare in a land where high temperatures cause refuse to putrefy in a matter of hours.

To Hindus the cow is sacred and its milk about the only animal product permitted to the vegetarian higher castes. Yet consider the milk situation as revealed in the report of Mr. R. A. Pepperall, who, in 1945, toured the country as Milk Marketing Adviser to the Government of India.

This report, which has not been generally published, "possibly because its observations and strictures might cause resentment in some sections of the Indian community," says that the present degree of efficiency of the dairy industry throughout India is probably the lowest in the whole world.

There are twenty-two million milk producers in India, which has one-third of the total number of milch cattle of the world, yet the accepted standard of animal nutrition would place the bulk of Indian dairy cattle in the category of acute malnutrition and this state of "semi-starvation" is responsible for the low milk yield.

"The trouble with India's milk industry," says Mr. Pepperall, "is that it is being asked to accept the burden of supplying milk on the basis of 20th century nutritional standards when, judged by European standards, it has hardly passed the 16th century."

In London, on his return from India, Mr. Pepperall, who is an officer of the British Milk Marketing Board, is reported to have said that London's sewage is three times as safe as Bombay's milk! And he considers that conditions are even worse in Calcutta, another city practically entirely under Indian local government.

To quote Mr. Pepperall on the methods by which the public receives its milk: "A survey of squalor, filth, ignorance or indifference towards hygienic principles, and revolting personal habits allied to official apathy, combines to produce in a Western mind a feeling of disgust and possibly of despair at the prospect of producing any appreciable improvement."

He castigates the utter neglect of public health displayed in allowing the continuance of the "vile conditions which exist in all parts of India." At Delhi, Lahore, Agra and other places, milch cattle are tied up in small courtyards or open places surrounded by houses, and many of these enclosures have earth floors which it is impossible to keep clean. Cow dung is made into cakes and plastered on the walls and, when dried, sold as fuel. The sight of women spending hours daily at this task and then, possibly without washing, dealing with the milk, was to Mr. Pepperall "utterly revolting."

There is no venom in the recording of this sordid state of affairs; merely a lifting of the curtain and taking a look at

India from the inside; an India which, on its political, financial and industrial power, is being accepted on terms of equality by the great democratic nations of the world.

In Calcutta, where again the responsibility rests on an Indian municipal body, thousands of buffaloes, together with a similar number of cows, are permanently maintained in stables, whence the milk is taken to market in open galvanized cans slung at the end of bamboo poles on the shoulders of coolies. The cans are quite open, except that straw or leaves are placed on the top to prevent the milk from spilling. The market is crowded with people chewing betel nut, smoking and spitting. In these conditions the milk is tested by prospective buyers dipping their hands into it to judge the amount of fat or added water. More dipping of hands occurs when the milk is measured after sale.

A milk vendor produced his licence for Mr. Pepperall's inspection. The only condition it contained was that the food (milk) must not be "spread on the pavement" and the vendor must stand in the gutter. He found that the general average of added water exceeded 25 per cent. and in one case was 87 per cent. To complete the picture it needs only to be mentioned that the added water usually is obtained from stagnant tanks !

Mr. Pepperall's report expresses no surprise at finding corruption among petty Indian officials charged with looking after the public interest in the various towns, but he does protest at the almost total apathy displayed by the public in a matter vitally affecting its health. For myself, I made it a practice, whenever unable to obtain imported tinned milk, to purchase pasteurised bottled milk and then personally attend to its boiling again. Indian milkmen, as Mr. Pepperall learned, have ways of removing and replacing bottle seals that defy detection.

If one is to judge on the evidence of the treatment of the revered cow and its life-giving milk, India's capacity to keep

its own house in order is, to say the least, unimpressive. For the better nourishment of dairy cattle and the improvement of the milk yield Mr. Pepperall has suggested feeding them fish, at the same time adding the reminder that, to sidestep Hindu religious prejudices, "some innocuous-sounding trade name for a preparation containing fish would have to be invented."

As a milk expert, Mr. Pepperall naturally was interested only in milch cattle. Had the scope of his investigation been wider, he would have come upon some other queer aspects of the Hindu in his "reverence" for the cow. No matter what disease the sacred animal may contract, it must not be put out of its misery. There are some charitable organisations which will buy up dying cows and, by feeding them a little better, quite unintentionally prolong their misery. But no consideration is shown the cow's male offspring where he lacks promise of growing into a useful bull.

In spite of the Hindu creed of *ahimsa,* which means non-injury as well as non-violence, the majority of male calves are castrated in cruel and primitive fashion in preparation for a life as plough or transport bullocks. It is a short life and a hard one. Shockingly underfed, these transport bullocks, goaded and overloaded, have, on official figures, an average life of two years. There may be some subtle distinction in Hinduism between the cow and the bullock, but to Europeans a religion is hypocritical which frowns on the eating of beef but remains unmoved at the sight of transport drivers producing a floundering gallop by remorselessly belabouring the bony spines of their bullocks or, worse still, twisting their tails and jabbing with a pointed stick the tender spot where they were deprived of their bullhood.

Cruelty to bullocks does not stand alone; nor is it confined to the few. Nothing could be worse than the treatment meted out to the tonga ponies of the cities of northern India, but here it is largely Moslems who are to blame. Dogs fare no better, though the cruelty to them consists mainly of lack of

feeding and care and the refusal, again on religious grounds, to do away with unwanted pups. They are left to scavenge for food among the gutter refuse, become riddled with disease and frequently end up with rabies.

Undoubtedly some of the cruel practices met in India can be laid at the door of mass ignorance, but many arise from a callous indifference to the pain and suffering of the lowly and helpless. Perhaps an India claiming a free and independent place among the civilised countries will find the time and energy to sweep away evils which ought to be as intolerable as foreign administration was made out to be.

This much I know. Mr. Pepperall's criticisms have been upheld by citizens of Calcutta who have petitioned various municipal authorities on the matter. It has been suggested that a Director of Milk should be appointed for each province, with a central body making decisions for India as a whole, carrying with it a proviso that the post should be held by an Englishman !

CHAPTER 13

Sir Frederick Whyte, who gave a lifetime of service to India, has said that when the Western man approaches the Hindu world he finds himself in another element, one where the "standards of life are here reversed, the facts of life become *Maya* (illusion), and the figure of man, so vital, so self-reliant in Europe, fades to a shadow before the invisible powers."

Here, perhaps, is an explanation of "man's inhumanity to man" which manifests itself in town and village, which imposes wage standards and living conditions that infect poverty with despair. One thing at least is certain, the figure of man fades to a shadow before the (to him) invisible powers that have fallen under the illusion of ascribing all ills, social and economic, to the presence in India of a foreign administration. In one of his many letters to a former Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, Gandhi wrote: "Add to this tale of woe the privations of the poor millions, due to India-wide scarcity, which I cannot help thinking might have been largely mitigated, if not altogether prevented, had there been a bona fide national government responsible to a popularly elected Assembly."

Gandhi was writing at the time of the 1943 Bengal famine, but for many years the burden of all his writings and speeches has been that whatever could be found wrong with, or in, India was due to the British. Yet, it was Indian merchants and jobbers who held back supplies and forced up prices at famine time, just as it is Indians who to-day own the factories, the slums and the land from which they wax fat while the "poor millions" referred to by Gandhi droop and die.

Kate Mitchell's "India, An American View" (and a distinctly anti-British one, at that) can be quoted as stating: "This grinding poverty manifests itself in many ways; in the prevalence of malnutrition and disease; in the horrible conditions of the industrial workers; in the enormous burden of agricultural debt and the steady increase in the number of landless peasants."

We have the statement of an Indian writer that "the Indian worker has had a long struggle to establish the most elementary rights of labour. . . . Indian businessmen emerged prosperously from the last war, but the workers' lot still showed no improvement. . . . As always when social reform lags behind economic progress, it became necessary to induce reform by legislation."

It is to be noted that the legislation referred to was introduced under a British administration, an administration whose every act was fiercely criticised in the Indian Press and evaded to the highest possible degree by employers of labour. And it is also to be noted that factory legislation necessarily stops at factory wages and conditions; it is powerless against conditions outside factories, even where the factory owner is also the workers' landlord.

Under a purely Indian Government and one obtaining office with the support of working-class sections, improvement should and will be looked for by the masses, but it is gloomily recalled that when Congress Party ministries were in office in most of the provinces up to 1939, when they resigned as a protest against India being brought into the war, widespread reforms were not introduced. There was, in fact, bitter dissatisfaction on the part of peasants and workers at the failure of these Indian ministries to carry out their election promises.

Agrarian legislation was extremely limited and avoided the basic problems of rent, tenancy and land revenue. In Bihar, Orissa and the United Provinces the peasants accused the Congress ministries of being hand in glove with the landlords and other vested interests.

There was also the spectacle of Indian ministries using a very heavy hand on their own followers, invoking the very sections of the Indian Penal Code that Congress had always violently denounced. Militant members of the party who protested, either by published statements or speeches at public meetings, against non-implementation of election assurances were arrested and one leading Congress Socialist was jailed for six months

for making a speech against recruiting. That a government which, by standing for the termination of British rule, was itself seditionist, should sentence one of its followers for sedition was understandably intolerable to the rank and file of the party.

When strikes occurred at Cawnpore and elsewhere in the United Provinces, the Congress ministry called upon the magistrates to quell demonstrations. This use of force particularly enraged the workers, who remembered all to clearly earlier Congress condemnation of British use of police action during industrial troubles.

Perhaps the highest point of resentment (and certainly the lowest depth of disillusionment) was reached when a Congress Government in Bombay put through an Industrial Disputes Bill imposing very serious limitations on the right to strike, and requiring a four months' period for the operation of conciliation machinery, during which it was illegal to stop work.

Taken over-all, the Congress ministries in the provinces proved distinctly reactionary. Practice was so unlike promise that those who had expected so much and received so little, came to suggest that the British granted provincial autonomy with the deliberate object of manœuvring Congress into a situation where, in the act of governing, it must discredit itself. Fantastic? Maybe, but not more so than many of the things spoken in India.

Just what were—and still are—the conditions in the towns and villages that the Congress ministries were to improve? How does the average worker live in Indian-run municipalities, like Bombay, Calcutta and Delhi?

Generally speaking, he lives in a *chawl* or a *bustee*. The first is a ramshackle tenement building, high but with the narrowest of frontages and the extremest of depths, cheap to build, getting the maximum use from the minimum space and in doing so depriving the inmates of air and light. The second, the *bustee*, is a collection of mean huts, sometimes of mud or

wood and galvanised iron, and frequently—in cities like Delhi—of dirty straw. There is no furniture, just the bare essential cooking pots of brass or inferior aluminium and usually no lighting beyond a smoky wick in a tiny earthen bowl or, in the south, half a cocoanut shell.

The average worker's family will be man, wife and two or three children. Two or more such families may share one room in *chawl* or *bustee*, and cases are not unknown of six families, comprising 30 adults and children, inhabiting a room 15ft. by 12ft.!

Some years ago an inquiry made by the Bombay Government Labour Office showed that of 1,469 families whose budgets were checked, more than 1,000 were living in one-room tenements and over 350 in two-room tenements. No fewer than 145 of the one-roomers shared with another family.

And the people who live in such places? Mostly villagers brought in for work in the mills and factories. A spinner in one of the Indian mills would normally earn forty to fifty shillings a month, with his wife doing casual work as a coolie and and bringing in anything from ninepence to one and twopence a day. But there would be the two or three young children to look after, which would cut into the woman's earning time. There would also be the bribe she would have to pay the foreman for giving her work, while the family income would be further lowered by the high interest payments on the loan the husband had to raise to bribe the jobber who arranged his employment at the mill.

In an effort to purchase transient freedom from the contemplation of his sordid surroundings and nagging burden of debt, the spinner, assuming him to be a typical case, would spend threepence or so a day on fiery local liquor and vary this with cheap and readily obtainable country drugs, such as *bhang*, *ganja* or *charas*, which, according to the amount taken, would stimulate him sexually or homicidially, or produce some hours of oblivion.

Day in and day out the spinner and his family would subsist on one meal a day, consisting of millet cakes and curried lentils or potatoes. No milk, butter or eggs, and only very rarely any vegetables or fruit. The result of the malnutrition consequent upon this inadequate diet, plus the unhealthy living conditions, is that city workers account for most of the half a million deaths from tuberculosis recorded annually. Cholera, dysentery and bubonic plague carry off many thousands more, and it is computed that two out of every four suffer from malaria.

In such circumstances it might be thought that the Indian worker would rally to trade unionism, even Communism. Mostly he doesn't. There are about two hundred and fifty recognised trade unions, of which the largest is the Railwaymen's Federation claiming a membership throughout India of 130,000, but none of them have the militancy or sound organisation of western unions. The Communist Party has the ablest leaders and staunchest followers, but they probably number under twenty thousand. To a considerable extent the religious customs which militate against desirable reforms, also turn the worker from the iconoclasm of Communism.

While trade unionism cannot yet be described as a mass movement, the Indian worker frequently resorts to the strike weapon to remedy his grievances. Lacking strike funds, he has to go for a quick decision. Usually this need impels him to violent action, which permits the employer to appeal for police intervention, whereupon the exasperated strikers attack the police and, with the situation getting out of hand, the latter open fire. In nine cases out of ten the firing is done by Indian police, British or Indian troops being called out only in the last resort, when, in fact, mob law threatens to take complete command.

There are many who believe that when India's destiny passes fully into Indian hands the country will be more violently split on industrial lines than it is on religious. Up to

now the labour movement, mainly because of the illiteracy of the workers, has been under the control of leaders drawn from the middle-class intelligentsia and has been used mostly for nationalistic ends. However, some of the unions and groups of unions are acting more on straight-out industrial lines and striking solely for increased pay, shorter hours and better conditions.

One large-scale successful strike of this nature might well have an effect throughout India quite out of proportion to the gains made by the union involved. Already notice has been taken in the *chawls* and *bustees* of the fact that while Gandhi acts humble and calls the Untouchables "little brothers," he seems to range himself on big issues on the side of the propertied classes. And Nehru, the Prime Minister, though given to Socialist-sounding utterances, has never joined the Socialist group in Congress.

The war saw a revision of working hours and an appreciable rise in wages, generally granted in the form of "dearness" allowances. These adjustments and increases were regarded as temporary by Indian employers, and the fight will be for the higher rates to be made permanent. In the face of the deflation consequent on the big reduction of Government spending from war-time levels, Indian employers generally will resist all labour demands, resorting to lockouts and similar weapons of intimidation calculated to provoke the workers to outbreaks against which armed forces can be enlisted.

Unfortunately, India is internecine and barely pretends to believe that all men are born free and equal. Gandhi himself, though he makes much publicised stays in the sweepers' quarters of Delhi, does not propose the total abolition of Untouchability, merely that the outcastes should be accepted as a new fifth caste, remaining at the bottom of the human scale but with some modification of their traditional status.

If the plight of the worker in industry is so dismal, that of the villager is materially no better, except that he lives an open-

air life in cleaner, healthier surroundings. But he carries the same burdens of poverty and debt and suffers the same degree of malnutrition. And here it must be explained that the poorer classes are not necessarily the lower classes. Apart from Hinduism's four main castes there are over two thousand sub-castes. The ragged, half-starved cultivator may be well up in the social scale and some part of his poor condition may be due to caste restrictions on his diet and scope of employment. It it not uncommon to see outcastes better nourished and more virile than the well-born who despise them. The outcaste eats whatever comes to hand and is much the better for it. Similarly, since he can follow any occupation he chooses, sometimes he is numbered among the wealthy.

The cultivator, on the other hand, must stick to his hereditary occupation and labour for the benefit of the landowners, either under the *zemindari* or *ryotwari* systems. Under the former, land is sub-let to the peasant by absentee freeholders or lease-holders; under the latter the peasant enters into a direct revenue agreement with the Government.

The advantage of the latter system is that the cultivator is not subject to a *zamindar*, who may raise the rent to meet the whim of the moment; neither does he have to deal through a chain of middlemen, each of whom screws the last anna out of him. The *zamindari* system prevails in Bengal, Bihar, the United Provinces and the northern parts of Madras, while the *ryotwari* is found in Gujerat, the Central Provinces and parts of south India.

With both systems, the peasant has the added burden of the *sahukar*, the village money-lender, often shopkeeper as well, who is easily the most sinister figure in rural life. Most crops are mortgaged to the *sahukar*, who puts up the funds for the peasant's plough bullocks and seed and everything else for which money is needed—marriages, dowries, without which daughters cannot be disposed of, funerals and the many religious festivals. The average rate of interest

charged by the money-lender is 35 per cent. yearly on a compound basis, although rates as high as 75 per cent. are not unknown. It has been estimated that Indian cultivators pay more to the *sahukar* in interest than they do to the Government in taxes; in fact, to restrain usury, legislation has been introduced in some provinces, the top rate on unsecured debts being fixed at 18 per cent. in the Punjab. But the man holding the money and the man needing it usually manage to evade the law.

Apart from the evils of *zamindar* and *sahukar*, the other big obstacle to Indian rural prosperity is land fragmentation, which results in small holdings of anything from two to twelve acres. Hinduism is behind this, through its custom of land division equally among the sons. In India farming cannot be an economic proposition under about fifteen acres, yet even in the rich and irrigated Punjab no more than one cultivator in seven has this much land. With primitive methods, and no manuring of the tired soil, on top of uneconomical holdings, rapacious landlords and extortionate money-lenders, it can readily be appreciated that the direst poverty is ever present and famine just round the corner.

The Indian peasant, while dimly conscious that someone else is taking over the running of the country, wearily recognises that it certainly isn't him.

CHAPTER 14.

Nothing could be more distasteful to one who has known India over a period of years, partaken of its hospitality and formed friendships among its peoples, than to expose its sores and point to its incapacity in managing its own affairs, but at the risk of being called an ingrate the faithful reporter has, as the Americans put it, to "get the record straight." It is not easy to do this. There are so many Indias, each different from the next, and then there is the universal tendency for reporters, be they resident officials, soldiers with regimental loyalties, businessmen knowledgeable with the achievements of commence, journalists on assignment, or politicians rich with rhetoric, to "angle" their story.

Think of it ! India is about nineteen times the size of Great Britain; it covers nearly two million square miles; it stretches from east to west more than two thousand miles and nearly the same distance from north to south; it has a sea frontier of 4,300 miles and a land frontier three hundred miles longer still, and contains one-fifth of the entire population of the world. It is a common error to think of India as a tropical country, but actually it lies to the north of the Equator and at least half of it, including the Iudus plain and most of the Ganges plain, lie in the so-called Temperate zone. From the high Himalayas in the north to Cape Comorin at the southern tip, there is a profuse diversity of race, colour, climate and language. In habit, speech and custom the Punjabi is farther removed from the Madrassi than the Swede is from the Spaniard. The last census showed 225 languages and dialects in India and its people a mosaic of different racial strains—Dravidian, Indo-Aryan, Mongol, Turkish, Persian, and even Greek. How then is it possible to generalise about India? In whatever it may be, the exceptions are likely to disprove the rule.

There is a tendency on the part of most who speak on or write about India to over-simplify. Doing so is less a seeking of the easy way with so complex a subject as an avoidance of

endless qualifications to every assertion. Even a ranging of the people on religious lines as Hindus and Moslems takes note only of two main groups. Many millions are accounted for under the headings of Christian, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Animist, Parsee, Jew and Theosophist. There are, for instance, about seven million Christians, while the Jews of Cochin established their colony as far back as 900 A.D. Mostly they have adopted Indian manners and customs.

Then again, Hindus of the same caste but of different parts of the country have different languages, customs and habits. The Moslem of Bengal has a closer racial affinity with his Hindu neighbour than he has with the Moslem of the Punjab, who speaks another language, dresses differently and eats wheat instead of rice. And it is difficult to trace any racial kinship between the high-caste Hindu of Madras and the high-caste Hindu of Kashmir. In appearance, language, customs and diet each represents a distinct type. A Brahmin from Travancore may be almost black and a Brahmin of the north as light-skinned as a European. In the north, Hindu women may wear baggy trousers and cover their faces with veils, while in the south women of the same caste may appear with heads uncovered and breasts barely concealed by a fold of the sari. Sir John Strachey was not far amiss when he said that the first and most essential thing to learn about India is that "there is not and never was an India possessing, according to European ideas, any sort of unity—physical, political, social or religious —and no 'people of India,' of which we hear so much." That blunt statement of 1888 requires merely the modification that a degree of political unity has been produced by Britain in her measures for convenience of administration. It is an imposed unity.

Already dust is arising from shufflings for a revision of provincial boundaries, boundaries drawn to suit the British administration. There appears a desire for the creation of more homogeneous provinces. The provinces of Orrissa and

Sind were an important adjunct to the enlargement of Indian self-government; a clash of patriotisms was to some extent responsible for the collapse of the first Congress Ministry in the Central Provinces; there are language and cultural groups in Madras and Bombay desiring to form separate provinces; there is a demand in some quarters for a revision of the frontiers of the United Provinces of Oudh and Rohilkhand; the former sharp controversy between Bengal and Bihar is neither dead nor forgotten. Then there is a scheme affecting the Princes' States which has as its object the grouping of people according to affinities.

Some redistribution of provincial boundaries seems certain, especially as the Congress Party sees benefit to itself in re-demarcation. Whether there is ultimate strength or weakness in such revision remains to be seen. The Communists, for example, came up with a plan for seventeen sovereign Assemblies based on areas linguistically or culturally allied and carved out of the eleven existing major provinces of British India. The Communists' idea is a multi-national State on the political, though not economic, lines of Soviet Russia. To the outside view it would seem that, with the existing Hindu-Moslem antagonisms and the "right" and "left" differences in the Congress Party, to say nothing of the reservations of the Princes, seventeen sovereign Assemblies might mean seventeen more insoluble arguments.

The Western world looks to see the new India emerge as a new democracy, but democracy spells different things to different people. To Indian politicians it may mean little more than an India ruled by Indians without the restraint of a foreigner's veto. To us the word implies a sense of responsibility on the part of all professing democracy, a belief in, if not the practice of, government of the people, for the people and by the people.

Just how far this notion has progressed in India may perhaps be indicated by the degree of responsibility, or otherwise, ex-

pressed in the Provincial elections held in the early months of 1946. These elections were to provide Hindu, Moslem, Christian, Sikh and Scheduled Caste Assemblymen from whom representatives on the Constitution-making body were to be chosen. The Provincial franchise is based on property and educational qualifications, which means that only about thirty-six millions are entitled to vote. It also means that voting is restricted to those who are deemed sufficiently developed to exercise the franchise; in effect, illiterates in India are excluded as are minors in Western countries.

The British all-Party Parliamentary delegation, which preceded the Cabinet mission to India, had the opportunity of moving about the country during the election campaign to see at first-hand how this system worked. It heard the arguments in favour of universal franchise and against the communal system under which Moslems vote for Moslems, Hindus for Hindus, Sikhs for Sikhs and so on. And at the end of a five weeks' tour the Parliamentarians were able to sum up their impressions.

At a farewell Press conference, Professor Richards, the leader of the delegation, had this to say: "There are deep divisions among you, but those divisions disappear in the unity with which you, in my humble opinion, very rightly demand a measure of self-government this time. There are several views on that particular question, *but I do say that we are all concious of the fact that India has at last attained political manhood,* and it will be the privilege of the Government in England, I hope, to extend and further that confidence which India has in herself and in her ability to take her place among the free nations of the world."

The italics being mine, I owe it to you to afford glimpses of India's "political manhood" in action, if only for purposes of comparison.

CHAPTER 15.

The first glimpse is provided by the unknown voter at Cuddalore, in Madras, who wrote across his ballot paper: "Elections are a curse brought from Europe to India."

The second glimpse is of Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, leader of the Bengal Moslem League Parliamentary Party and now Premier of Bengal, declaring at a Press interview: "The British conception of majority rule, suitable to a homogeneous community, is not applicable to India. Democracy here does not mean throwing a minority nation to the wills and caprices of a majority nation."

The third glimpse is of the former Congress Party president, Maulana Azad. On April 4, 1946, in commenting on reports of alleged official interference in connection with the Central Assembly and different Provincial elections, he declared: "There has been an inter-provincial conspiracy of Government officials to do everything possible to help the Moslem League candidate. . . . I have it from unimpeachable sources that official interference, corruption and intimidation of the worst type have vitiated the Bengal elections in a manner almost without parallel in the history of elections anywhere."

Giving specific instances of this alleged interference, ranging from Calcutta to Peshawar, Maulana Azad claimed that in the North-West Frontier Province the late Governor, Sir George Cunningham, "entered the lists openly in favour of the Moslem League and canvassed against Congress Party candidates." He also alleged that Sir George attended a marriage ceremony at Hotimardan, where he "openly asked the Nawab to join the League and stand as a candidate on its behalf."

In reply, the Governor, when passing through Bombay on his way to England, told the "Times of India" that the Congress President's allegation was "a canard which held its own refutation." He had not even visited Hotimardan, much less attended a marriage ceremony there.

Though forced to withdraw his allegations on this count, the Maulana continued with sensational charges regarding election happenings in Bengal. He asserted that Mr. S. J. Hashemi, a Congress candidate, was assaulted by political opponents in the presence of officials in the Kaliganj police station, that another candidate, Dr. Asanaulla, was attacked in the Phatikehari police station in the presence of the Sub-Registrar and other officials, that Mr. H. R. Choudhury, candidate for Tippera north-east, was abducted, that Mr. K. Ali, candidate for Kishoreganj, was kept confined in his house under threat of murder, that Mr. B. Ali, a candidate from Seraganj, was abducted and forced to declare that he would withdraw from the elections, and that the houses of two other candidates were burned in order to intimidate them. Other charges were that "cases of intimidation and violence at the polling stations were reported from almost every constituency."

Leaders of the Moslem League and other parties not only were quick to deny Maulana Azad's grave allegations, but made as long a list of countercharges against the Congress Party. Mr. Suhrawardy had this to say: "Does it lie in the mouth of the Congress that murdered over 100 Adibasis at Tapakara, in Ranchi district, on the eve of the elections—41 bodies have already been dragged out of the jungle—and committed probably the most atrocious crime in election history, to speak of hooliganism, intimidation and oppression by other parties?"

Even if this mass of charges and countercharges could be dismissed as super-heated political hot air, there is, I suggest, every evidence of irresponsibility on the part of the political leaders concerned, a degree of irresponsibility that ill accords with resounding phrases about the attainment of political manhood. But there is more than hot air to it; there is a chilling draught of disturbing fact about some of the happenings.

The Calcutta and Delhi newspaper, "The Statesman," wrote editorially on April 1, 1946, that: "The Nawab of Dacca's son complained that Moslem Leaguers attacked his father's polling

camp. The Moslem League in the Punjab has made wholesale allegations of Unionist (non-League Moslem) interference with the elections, both through official channels and by brute force; the Unionists have replied with countercharges. The Adibasis have charged the Congress with the murder of some of their supporters in Bihar. In the United Provinces there was a serious election riot at Cawnpore. In Labour constituencies unions have charged their rivals with making use of a privileged position with the employers."

"People's Age," the Communist Party weekly, published accounts of attacks on Communists alleged to have been made by Congress supporters. The Party office in Bombay was wrecked by a mob, with about £7,000 damage done to linotypes and printing presses. Pundit K. Sharma, Communist candidate in Bihar, was set upon and severely beaten, again allegedly by Congress supporters. Professor Niren Roy was similarly attacked at Budge Budge, near Calcutta. There were also frequent allegations that Communists, women included, had been roughly handled when selling Party newspapers.

Regardless of whether one favours Communism, the fact remains that it is a legally recognised party in India and formerly was an intra-Congress party. Because they supported the war effort, the Communists are known in Congress circles as the "Traitors of 1942" and "Government agents."

The tale of intimidation and coercion goes on with the charges of the secretary of the Radical Democratic Party, Mr. V. B. Karnik, of a brutal assault committed against Pundit Joshi, general secretary of the Maharashtra Provincial Committee, of a reign of terror against colliery workers at Jharia for about a month before the elections and of the terrorisation of voters by Lathials (hooligans armed with iron-shod poles) in the Shahabad district of Bihar. And the Scheduled Castes (Untouchables) complain of bodily assaults and the burning down of their miserable dwellings by alleged Congress supporters.

It is not surprising in the circumstances to find Mr. M. N. Roy, the Radical Democrat leader, describing the provincial elections as a "Hitler election." Every characteristic of Nazism was plainly in evidence.

"The Statesman" takes this point when it says: "It has been curiously noted that during the elections outright violence usually occurred when one side had an overwhelming majority, seldom when both were evenly matched. For example, the Nawab of Dacca was defeated in one constituency by seven to one, and Mr. Bankim Mukerjee, Communist candidate in Howrah, lost his deposit. If this is typical it augurs ill for the behaviour of triumphant majorities, and for the acquiescence of minorities, in independent India. . . . If this shall be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?"

Misgivings about the uses to which India's "political manhood" are being put are also troubling Indians themselves. These misgivings find expression in letters to such newspapers as are not too blinded by partisanship to find space for them. A view widely held by moderate elements has been summed up by Mr. Ranjit Sinha, of Calcutta, in this way: "The tirades against Communists by leaders like Pundit Nehru, Sardar Patel and Sarat Bose," he says, "have energised the anti-democratic forces in the same way as in the Germany of 1929-30. The 'blood for blood' slogan on our boys' lips reminds us of Mussolini's brigands in the streets of Rome. Step by step this anti-democratic movement has emerged immeasureably stronger and consequently it has taken on the shape of Fascism. Fascism, with its propaganda and boisterousness, has great attractions for the young and hot-tempered. A young man likes bragging hero-worship. Youth wants action and the agents provocateur supply this. India does not lack these factors."

In February, 1946, a student demonstration in Calcutta against a sentence of imprisonment on an officer of the pro-Japanese Indian National Army for gross cruelty to war

prisoners who refused to join that army, led to rioting in which 20 were killed and 225 injured. During the riots, which ebbed and flowed for some days, an Indian reporter mingled with the mobs, seeking news and views. Some of the rioters thought they were demonstrating because there had been firing by the police in Bombay, some because the Government had raised the sales tax by the equivalent of a farthing in the shilling; others admitted they did not know what it was all about. No one had told them why they were rioting, nor could they say who had told them to riot. They were just rioting. That was all there was to it !

CHAPTER 16.

Apologists for India's backwardness in any respect usually proffer the easy assertion that all of it is due to poverty and illiteracy. Once education is free and universal, they contend, a broad sense of responsibility will quickly develop. It is to be hoped for the peace and progress of the world at large that it does, for an irresponsible self-governing India can be not only as great an international problem as China now is, it can become a prime agent of disruption.

The situation at the moment is that about twelve and a half per cent. of the people in British India are literate. It is a very low percentage, but at the same time it means that there are more literate people in British India than there are in the whole of the British Isles! Apart from these fifty millions or so who have been to school, much higher percentages of literacy can be shown in some of the Indian States, notably in Travancore and Mysore. For example, in Travancore 67 per cent. of the men are literate and over 42 per cent. of the women. In British India, on the other hand, the literate men outnumber the literate women by about five to one.

In India to-day there are seventeen universities, from which 15,000 students graduate yearly, three hundred and fifty arts colleges and over one hundred professional colleges specialising in such subjects as medicine, engineering, technology and the training of teachers. There are also separate colleges for women students and one woman's university. Then, of course, there are the 170,000 primary schools to which children go at the age of five and leave when they are twelve. The secondary schools take them on until they are sixteen, when they sit for the school-leaving or matriculation examination.

Since 1835 English has been the medium of post-primary instruction, and this accounts both for the fluency with which most educated Indians speak the "language of commerce" and for the political lines along which the country has developed. It was through the English tongue that nationalism spread so

easily from Gujarati and Bengali to Punjabi, Madrassi and the rest of the racially different peoples.

The Hindus were quicker to see the advantages of the British system of education than the Moslems; indeed, it was not until 1875 that the latter really took to English learning and founded the Anglo-Oriental College, later to blossom into the famous Aligarh University. This slowness off the mark on the part of the Moslems meant that Hindus had time to entrench themselves in the Civil Service. To restore the balance the Government adopted a policy of reserving certain posts for candidates from the different communities. This "fair play" device is nowadays much criticised and is alleged to be one cause of communal antagonisms.

Another educational problem arises from far too many students taking an Arts course. Annually the number of "failed B.A.'s" largely exceeds the 15,000 who graduate with various degrees. It used to be a joke to see a "Situations Wanted" advertiser announcing his qualifications as "Failed B.A." Nowadays it is a tragedy. Minor clerical posts in the post offices, the police stations and commercial houses, worth no more than £7 or £10 a month, are filled with young men of University education, but sullen with the sense of failure. It is to this numerically considerable class that the extreme forms of nationalism appeal as a way of escape.

Up in the Kulu Valley, called "The Garden of the Gods," I remarked to the hotel "butler" that his knowledge of English was unusually good. He smiled acknowledgement of the compliment and went away, shortly to return with papers showing him to be a "Plucked B.A." of the Punjab University. "Plucked" means that for one reason or another, generally lack of means, the student is unable to complete the course. It was so in the case of Faiz Mohammed. His father's death and his sister's dowry swallowed up the funds earmarked to see him through the university and launched on a legal career.

"But with these," I said, indicating the certificates, "you could have obtained a Government appointment."

"True," replied Faiz Mohammed, "but at what salary? Fifty, sixty rupees. To keep my mother and my young brothers and my family—I am married, as you know, I must make not less than rupees one hundred monthly. As butler here I get rupees eighty in the season and tips make it up to the hundred, sometimes to 120 or more when all the people staying are Europeans."

Faiz Mohammed and I talked much together. He was an excellent butler, but would have made a better lawyer. But then there are far too many lawyers in an India immemorially litigious. I remember hearing the Maharajah of Dholpur, the benevolent ruler of a State of modest proportions, say his policy was not to emphasise education, as Indian farmers when educated become lawyers and a State full of lawyers turns corrupt and soft.

Perhaps the Maharajah was joking, but there are many who would agree that anything tending to add to the corruption rife in all walks of life in India should be discouraged. However, now and for a long time to come India must look to its existing educated classes for its major and minor official place fillers. And as there are so many lawyers already scrumming for the plums there is little chance of real peasants' or workers' leaders emerging.

Practically all the big political figures, including Gandhi, Nehru, Jinnah, Rajagopalachari and a host more, are lawyers; so are most of the trade union and leftist leaders. If as many Indians had taken medicine as have studied law, the country would be in a healthier and probably happier state. The same applies to the study of agriculture and the sciences. But medicine and the rest are lengthier and more exacting courses, whereas the aim of the majority is to obtain a degree of some sort as quickly as may be.

This explains cribbing as the rule rather than the exception and the wholesale employment of invigilators in an effort to check cheating at examinations. It also explains, though it cannot excuse, dastardly attacks upon and even the murder of these examination supervisors and student "strikes" against exams when they consider the papers too difficult. It explains, too, the numerous suicides that follow the publication of the examination results.

Lots of Indians prove themselves outstanding scholars and many who have gone on to European and American Universities after graduating in India, as well as the numerous wealthy ones who have had their entire secondary education abroad, have gained world-wide distinction. Unfortunately far too many enter universities unfit to obtain a degree by legitimate means, and while Indian University conditions are not all they should be, the universities have to do their best with the human material offering. Since their overhead costs are heavy, the universities must in a sense go in for mass production. With costs being met out of examination fees, those in charge naturally breathe a sigh of relief when candidates flock in.

Professors from widely separated universities have expressed the opinion that they are getting poorer stuff to work on than was the case ten or twenty years ago. This criticism obviously reflects on the schools where boys spend seven or eight years before entering universities. In turn, these schools pass the blame on to poor home training in pre-school days.

As to the private colleges, which shape the material for the universities, some have a splendid record, but many others undoubtedly deserve the strictures passed upon them by the professors. Being dependent on fees they indulge the students to an extent that impairs both work and discipline. Lecturers are bitter in their complaints that they are warned to avoid trouble with the students, lest the latter should leave the college. Certainly a case was recently reported in the Indian

Press of a lecturer who was informed that his month's salary would not be forthcoming as a student he had rebuked had resigned and the college consequently had suffered a loss of fees. It is no secret that lecturers are told to pass a certain percentage of examination candidates, irrespective of merit, so that the number of fee-paying students may be maintained. Small wonder that Indian college and university discipline is of a low order and examinations regarded as a racket.

During the latter part of the war I occupied a position in India which brought me into close contact with a number of Indians of college and university education. The pick of them were mature men who had been educated under British masters in Rangoon, Singapore or south India. And the best again in this small section were those who, after graduating, had been employed under British editors on newspapers in those places. They were better grounded in every way, had maintained the pursuit of knowledge and were quickest to appreciate the fine points of what we call political warfare and the Australians and Americans, more fittingly, psychological warfare. The younger men, entirely trained and educated in India, mostly in northern India, were of lesser calibre. They were unreliable and either indolent or unfitted for the slightest responsibility. European members of the staff had to exercise the closest supervision over everything they did. Indian steno-monitors could not be relied upon to take a coherent note of a B.B.C. news broadcast, even under perfect reception conditions. Obvious errors in Press telegrams were allowed to pass, corrections were ignored and the Creed was permitted to unreel its text, frequently containing vital news "flashes," all over the office floor while these "qualified" sub-editors sat unconcernedly around.

Dominion and Fleet Street journalists joining the department were rocked to their foundations by this state of affairs. At first they assumed it to be a manifestation of Indian "non-co-operation," but deeper inquiry revealed this was not so. What they were specifically and individually instructed to do,

the younger Indians attempted; it was when initiative was called for that they were found lacking.

The Indians suffered woefully by contrast with the Chinese, Burmese, Malays and Siamese attached to the department. These other Asiatics were more alert, cheerful and confident. Their response to the impact of events was quick; they made decisions and were ready to defend them. Generally, they disliked the Indians, regarding them as hypocritical as well as incompetent.

I recall an Australian who came to India warm in sympathy for Indians and cold with contempt for the "burra sahibs." He spent much of his spare time trying to draw out his Indian colleagues and encouraging them to express their own sense of news values. The experiment ended with his announcement that any two cadets of the Sydney "Sun" would do a better job than a dozen Indian journalists of senior status.

Admitting all the exceptions to the rule and acknowledging the dazzling brilliance of outstanding students, it is difficult to see how an impartial observer can avoid the conclusion that if the leavening of the illiterate masses is to be dependent on the yeast of the educated class of the existing system and standard, then the Indian loaf may remain as flat as a *chappati.*

CHAPTER 17.

In the Indian order of things nursing is not looked upon as a profession for girls of respectable family. Which probably accounts for there being only about seven thousand registered nurses in India. And most of these splendid women are Anglo-Indians, for only Indian parents of high social courage and a profound humanitarianism can bring themselves to allow their daughters to take up hospital work.

In view of this extraordinary but stubborn attitude, it follows that the monumental report of the Health Survey and Development Committee, presided over by the eminent Indian judge, Sir Joseph Bhore, and comprising leading Indian and European medical men, has so far failed to win popular acclamation.

Appointed by the Government of India in 1943 to produce a post-war public health plan, the Bhore Committee recommends a forty year crusade against disease, the first ten year stage alone to cost £750,000,000.

Among other things, it proposes increasing the number of trained nurses from 7,000 to 750,000 and the number of doctors from 47,500 to 185,000. Qualified pharmacists simultaneously are to be raised from a mere 75 to 62,000.

Nothing could spotlight India's deficiencies in health services so sharply as these figures. The problems of recruiting the huge reinforcements of doctors, nurses and apothecaries and of finding the vast sums needed to finance the plan, may seem well-nigh insoluble in the face of India's limited taxable capacity and prejudice against nursing. But there are other problems of staggering quality and implication.

For example! It is estimated that the annual loss to India from malaria in terms of lives is almost two and a half millions, and in wealth, through the loss of the productive capacity of these unfortunates, about £112,500,000. So it would seem that if malaria could be brought under rigid control within five

years, the savings from that alone in the following five years would go far to meet the cost of the ten year stage of the plan.

However, even if the solution of one part of the programme along these lines proved as easy in practice as on paper, it would merely create another problem. It is this: Three million people die each year from causes preventable in countries where a properly organised national health service exists. If the three millions who otherwise would have died are kept alive through implementation of the Bhore Committee's recommendations, the total annual addition to the population increases from five millions to eight millions. How can an India which finds itself in the throes of famine if the monsoon is below normal, and whose resources are strained anyway, manage to feed and support these extra numbers? The Bhore Committee acknowledges that this is a conundrum for which it has no answer.

Gingerly, very gingerly indeed, it mentioned birth limitation under State aid and control, but hastened to admit that while this could be justified on economic grounds and largely for health reasons in a country where child-bearing is too early and too frequent, there might be strong objections in certain quarters on religious grounds. There are indeed. Mahatma Gandhi promptly loosed off a thunderclap of denunciation. Birth control strikes at a Hinduism which in its temples and in wayside shrines erects a stone *lingam* (symbolic representation of the male organ of generation) frequently in juxtaposition with a stone *yoni* (symbol of the female organ).

Between 1921 and 1941 the population of India increased by eighty-three millions and the improved conditions suggest that the next eighty-three millions increase will come in ten instead of twenty years. During the past sixty years the fall in India's fertility rate has been negligible compared with the fall in mortality. In the decade ending in 1891 the fertility rate was 49 and the death rate 41. In the decade between 1931 and 1941 the fertility rate was down to 45, but the death rate dropped

away to 31. Even with an infant mortality rate of 185 per thousand (sometimes it reaches 400 per thousand in the larger towns), with two and a half million children dying annually before the age of five, with the average expectation of life being below 30 years and about 150,000 women dying annually in childbirth, or from causes associated with it, the population multiplies at a rate that continually outstrips improved food production and the increasing resources from international trade.

The population problem may become a more distressing one than the political and constitutional problems which now fill the Indian horizon. It is quite unrealistic to pretend that social and economic vultures will become bulbuls once self-government is established. Indeed, the Bhore Committee in its report recognises that the "greatest good for the greatest number" has little chance of acceptance as the sole guiding principle, even in so vital a matter as public health. Its medical plan asks only that one-third of the posts in the general health services should be filled on merit! With the remaining two-thirds, "consideration may be given to the representation of the different communities." The Committee also admits that both in respect of the necessary legislation and administration, it is likely that some of the measures to be undertaken may offend social and religious practices, while others may involve control over the day-to-day life of the citizen.

The wariness with which even the most ardent and advanced Congress figures approach the basic needs of the country were illustrated in a Press interview given in May, 1946, by the newly-elected United Provinces Local Self-Government Minister, Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit. "We would like," she said, "to introduce a new health scheme based on the recommendations of the Bhore Committee. But," she hastily added, "adapted to our present day needs and, of course, consistent with our national policy."

Mrs. Pandit went on to say that the main difficulty in fostering large-scale health schemes was the shortage of nurses. In the United Provinces with its preponderance of orthodox Hindus and its as rigidly orthodox Moslem minority, the double problem of securing adequate numbers of nurses and getting the caste-bound sick to accept their ministrations must certainly test the talents even of this emancipated woman.

The Bhore report is perhaps the most comprehensive document yet produced on a problem from which most other Indian problems stem. It is its own tribute to what can be done by Indians and Europeans working together. In its four big volumes, the report gives a mass of valuable information about conditions, defects and needs, overlooking no factor of importance. But between sweeping and desirable recommendations and the implementation of them by Central and Provincial Indian Governments there is a distinction and a difference.

Both in its long and short term aspects, the Bhore report deals with the treatment of disease not merely from the point of view of offering the sufferer immediate relief, but also by attempting to remove the causes of the trouble. Thus it covers sanitation, housing, nutrition, employment, wage standards, agricultural and industrial production, communications and even marriage.

The first and extremely stiff hurdle for even the most enthusiastic Provincial Government is finding the money for health. At present provincial expenditure on health measures ranges from about fourpence to a shilling a head. The Bhore Committee's proposals involve additional expenditure of around one and ninepence a head in the first year, and four and six in the tenth. Nothing is so unpopular or provocative as adding to the existing burden of taxation. This prospect alone might be sufficient to deter Indian ministries directly answerable to the electorate, but that is not all. The proposals cut across Hindu custom by advocating family limitation and

raising the marriage age to sixteen, seventeen, or even eighteen years. The Sarda Act of 1929 makes fourteen the minimum marriageable age for girls, but evasions of this law are common enough and the enforcement of an even later minimum age would seem to be an almost hopeless task.

Laws passed to lesson the evils of the dowry system by restricting the amount payable by a girl's father to a modest figure are constantly evaded, or produce results exactly the opposite of those intended. Early in 1945 I saw reported in an Indian paper the fact that in Gujarat girls were being sold for about £30, with somewhat higher prices for fair-skinned and good-looking ones. The reason given was that the dowry limitation law made it impossible to obtain husbands for them. The Gujaratis, incidentally, are Gandhi's own community.

CHAPTER 18.

There are so many cross-currents in Indian life, so many contradictions, distortions and delusions and so much that is incredible to the average person of the West, that the presentation of a balanced picture is all but impossible. Photographs come out all blinding light and black shadows; extremes are dominant everywhere, so that it is by sharp contrasts that India comes to be judged.

India is rich, dazzingly and often crudely; India is poor, often unbelievably; India is non-violent and compassionate; India is violent and grossly inhumane; India is serene in a civilisation pre-dating most others; India is irresponsibly adolescent in her political upsurge; India is brave and selfless; India is craven and treacherous; India is a land of saints and ascetics; India is a land of mean and ruthless capitalists; India is a home of free philosophy; India is an entrenchment of intolerance; India is communist; India is fascist.

All contrasts are to be seen, all contradictions are correct. The question is whether from immersion in the washtub of undiluted self-rule the harsh colours will soften and, if in running they lose their crazy pattern, there will emerge to be hung on the clothes-line of the nations a garment less discordant, or whether it will be so inharmonious that there will be resort to the dye-pot—red or black.

Anglicised or, more accurately, Westernised Indians are voluble in their belief that under their *dhobi*-ing it will dry out in a choice range of complementary brown tonings. Now brown, of course, is produced by the admixture of black, yellow and red. Put together in certain proportions they give the brown of Nazism. Separately they are the colours of Fascism, Hinduism, Communism.

Pundit Nehru and some other Indian political figures insist that Fascism or Nazism are foreign to the Indian nature, that an independent India inevitably and unquestionably will

be non-aggressive and peace-seeking. Not only does this assertion blandly ignore history and the typically Nazi practices of the 1946 electioneering, it disregards the authoritarian conditioning inherent in Hinduism.

Nehru himself, in his latest book "The Discovery of India," admits that the conception and practice of caste are obviously opposed to democratic conceptions and that, in the context of society to-day, the caste system and much that goes with it are wholly incompatible, reactionary, restrictive, and barriers to progress. "There can be," he says, "no equality of status and opportunity within its framework, nor can there be political democracy and much less economic democracy."

Expressing this opinion, Nehru might be assumed to be against the caste system. Perhaps he is, although I cannot recall any proposal of his for its abolition. In any case, Nehru is not India and can hardly hope to attain the special position as the mouthpiece, guide and guardian of India that Gandhi achieved.

Indian students and politicians abroad propagate the notion that the caste system is on its way out and that educated Indians generally are dropping it. This is untrue. Westernised Indians deceive themselves when they argue that the three things which bound the early Aryan invaders together—caste, the joint family and the Sanskrit rituals—are in the discard. Hindu life is still marked by excessive ritualism and the Hindu to-day is constantly reminded of the discipline and ideals of his faith. No matter how perfunctorily he may observe the ceremonials, he is nonetheless obliged to maintain the continuity of tradition. And it is worth remembering, especially as nationalist India complains bitterly of alleged racial discrimination, that the basis of caste is the colour bar. The Sanskrit word of caste is *varna* and means colour.

To-day, as thousands of years ago, the Indian puts a special value on a light-coloured skin. If he hasn't one he will seek

a fair-skinned wife in the hope that his offspring will be of light hue. Of course, there are even dark-skinned Brahmins and some of the southerners are virtually black, but that doesn't alter the fact that dark skins are looked upon as a handicap.

The matrimonial columns of any Indian paper reveal a fair skin as a definite asset. Take the "Hindustan Times," a Congress daily edited by Gandhi's son. Any day you will see advertisements like the following examples :

"Wanted: White-complexioned girl for Bisa Agarwal graduate."

"Wanted : A suitable Brahmin match for beautiful, fair girl of 19."

"Wanted : A suitable Punjabi Khatri, 18 years, as a match for a Khanna beautiful, fair, slim girl reading for a B.A. First daughter of respectable Government contractor."

"Wanted : Match for slim, light-complexioned, handsome Arora girl; cultured, music, dance; M.A."

"Match for educated, fair, domestic Saxena Dusre girl of 16."

"Wanted : Graduate match for Bisa Agrawal girl. She is a B.A. aged 21 years. Structure, thin; medium sized; wheatish complexion."

Note that this is educated India speaking in an English-language newspaper. Hindu India in publicity to the outside world is one thing, Hindu India in practice in its own home is another.

On the subject of caste there is another aspect which permits certain comparisons. Caste is explained as a group system based on services and functions—Brahmins the thinkers, Kshatriayas the warriors, Vaisyas the businessmen and Sudras (outside the social pale) servitors of the other three castes.

An individual counts only as a member of a group, the Indian social tendency being to subordinate the individual to the claims of the group. The family system fosters a spirit of dependence upon elders and upon those in authority. Thus, quite obviously, group or collective psychology plays a very important part in Hindu India. And it is this very group psychology which accounts for the hysterical violence that breaks out on the slightest provocation. Word runs through the *bazar* that a Moslem has killed a Hindu boy and there are bloody riots lasting for days. Someone yells that an Army lorry has injured a sacred cow. Scores are dead and hundreds injured in the ensuing disturbances before the truth of the report is checked.

In the non-political India of earlier centuries the clashes arising from sudden group hysteria had not a far-reaching effect; for one thing, communications being non-existent, the news of such happenings did not spread. But nowadays serious note has to be taken of the effects Hindu collective psychology can have. The world knows to its cost what arose out of the Nazi rejection of individualism, tolerance of minorities and religious freedom in favour of a collective psychology.

There are opposing forces at work in the Hindu mind. There is on the one hand acceptance of *Maya*, of all physical and material things as illusory, and on the other an ardent devotion to the gods and heroes of the *Ramayana*. Throughout Hindu India the recitation of the great epics can be heard. and many of the large number of Indian films produced annually glorify the deeds of historical and mythological figures. To date, active emotion has been directed broadly to the aim of national independence. It will be both interesting and disturbing to see what results when, as inevitably it must, Hinduism in free India attempts to reincarnate its "Golden Age" of gods and heroes.

As there are opposing forces at work, so there are opposing voices to be heard. But which is the real voice of India? That

of the $87\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of illiterate peasants, workers and soldiers, or that of the comparatively small, town-bred intelligentsia afire with Western notions of nationalism and economic and political exploitation? Group psychology is as potent in the Westernised coteries as in the Hindu village communities. Suffering from the psychology of "oppression" the articulate minority in India, affected as it is by the aggressive and nationalistic virus brought in from the West, exhibits all the symptoms of a frustration neurosis, the same sort of neurosis that, in Germany, Hitler was able to take advantage of. Time alone can show whether independent India will bog down in the inertia of its own poverty-striken masses. At the moment its momentum is the momentum of the articulate minority.

There is ground for the belief held in some quarters that frustrations resulting from a failure to achieve internal unity and from deferment of any substantial improvement in the lot of peasants and workers, may lead to a resort to totalitarian measures of public discipline for the stifling of agitation and the diversion of attention from internal woes to external affronts. Even in non-totalitarian countries it is by no means unknown for a Goverment to side-step domestic embarrassments by raising some foreign issue. India has considerable practice in heeding the voice of one man. After Gandhi, the voice of guidance and authority may not echo his creed of "non-violence."

The extent to which fascism in some form could take effect in India is, however, a subject of considerable conjecture. While there is a deep-rooted habit of subservience and a ready-made group psychology requisite to fascism, there are also habits and qualities tending to clog the machinery of regimentation. In all grades there is procrastination and the evasion of responsibility, together with a lack of application and vitality for which the general poverty may be accountable. There is, too, the loyalty to the family group which, in certain situations, overrides the

claims of caste or communal group. Another factor is the Indian habit of squatting on the haunches to perform any and every sort of task short of walking behind a plough or carrying a load. Fascism demands strutters, not squatters.

CHAPTER 19.

The question of whether India possesses the vitality to match her urge to independent nationhood has been raised by Pundit Nehru himself. "Have we," he asks in one of his writings, "had our day and are now living in the late afternoon or evening of our existence, just carrying on after the manner of the aged, quiescent, devitalized, uncreative, desiring peace and sleep above all else?" Being an ardent among ardent nationalists, Nehru quite naturally does not want the answer to be in the affirmative; in fact, he explains that in his wanderings among the people of India he has always been in search of something akin to the vital energy he sensed in the Americans, Russians and Chinese.

"If the Indian people had this vitality," says Nehru, "then it was well with them and they would make good. If they lacked it completely, then our political efforts and shouting were all make-believe and would not carry us far."

That is all too true and is a matter for general concern. An independent India, emotional but without vitality, must surely prove a burden to the world. Even a militant vitality, for all its potential threat, would be better than no vitality at all. Yet most observers have noted a curious devitalizing influence in India. It is not a recent development, and is something apart from the enervation of mass poverty. In a land with so wide a range of climates, it cannot be purely climatic, malign though the Indian sun may be. All the major invaders, from Darius the Persian, in 516 B.C., down to Baber the Mogul in 1526 A.D., experienced deterioration, and either withdrew to kindlier climes or, sapped of energy, fell into decay. Not Baber himself, perhaps, since he founded the dynasty of the Great Moguls, but his line. Though his heart was ever in the cool highlands of his birth, Baber remained in the harsh land he had conquered and strove to weld it into an empire, as the British did long after him.

It was because they came as administrators and not as settlers that the British escaped devitalization. Each generation contributed its selected quota of new blood and new energy, while periodic return to the cool, clean air of Britain provided physical and mental reinvigoration. In addition, the British administrators were thus kept in direct contact with Western progress in politics, science and agriculture. Because they thus avoided absorption into, or submersion in the Indian stream, the British have been criticised as mere exploiters, but would the present-day nationalists rather have had them there as colonisers?

Nehru chooses to regard the period of British association with India as "just one of the unhappy interludes in her long story." He conjures up a Devil but declines to give the Devil his due. The India now assuming the power and dignity of a free and equal nation is a British India, an India that has benefitted from an injection of Western vitality, even though its pride may have been pricked by the fact of foreign rule. Where repeated transfusions of alien vitality are absent, the results soon become apparent. Man, beast and plant unfailingly deteriorate. There is evidence of this in the weediness of physique and character displayed by the second and third generations of *kutcha* Europeans whose parents have settled in India, as in the drooping stamina of horses lacking the tonic of new blood from Britain, Australia or the Central Asian highlands. Devitalization may be seen, too, in the fruit trees brought in from Europe. Even in the temperate clime of the lower Himalayas, English cherry, pear and apple trees degenerate. It is the same on the plains with wheat, oats and barley. This deterioration affects not only alien strains. Indigenous varieties of fruit, such as oranges, mandarins, pineapples, bananas, pawpaws, custard-apples and mangoes are of poor size and quality compared with those produced from transplantings in Australia and like places.

Poverty of soil, poverty of peasantry and primitive agricultural methods are more nearly reflections than explanations of the devitalization which so many others, besides myself, have noted. This blighting influence is not general throughout Asia. For instance, it would be difficult to find a less stimulating diet than that of the Japanese or, generally speaking, a poorer or more overworked soil than that of Japan, yet the energy and stamina of the Japanese is remarkable.

It is a seeming paradox that an India subsisting for the most part on a handful of parrot seeds and rice can be stirred to riot and rampage at the blink of an eyelid. Where in white countries brawls and demonstrations rarely require more than the controlling influence of one or two policemen, similar happenings in India invariably necessitate the intervention of armed police or troops. For example, the Hindu-Moslem communal outbreaks in Calcutta, Bombay and other places at the end of August and beginning of September, 1946, when more than 1,500 were killed and several thousands injured and British troops were called out by Indian Ministries. Elected Congress Ministries, equally with the former British provincial administrations, find themselves unable to maintain order without recourse to firearms. The emotional energy which activates Indians individually, or in the mass, is a different thing from vital energy, though the two are often confused. And when Nehru says—though he admits that perhaps his wishes distort his thinking—that he feels India has vast stores of suppressed energy, he, too, may be mistaking the emotional for the vital.

If Indian emotionalism could remain in the realm of psychiatric discussion and disputation we might console ourselves with the knowledge that India is a far country, but the inescapable fact is that we, and the world, are adding to our existing woes and worries a new nation which, willy-nilly, is going to demand power equality and, by all indications, exercise that power on an emotional bias instead of a logical conviction.

Evidence of this already is manifest. A resolution on the international situation adopted by the Congress Working Committee (the executive) on March 15, 1946, contained the following: "It has thus become urgently necessary to end foreign domination over the countries of Asia and Africa, and for foreign armies to be withdrawn from all such countries, and notably from Indonesia, Indo-China, Iran and Egypt. India," the resolution added, "remains the crux of the problem of Asian freedom and on the independence of India depends the freedom of many countries and the peace of the world."

On the following day the same Congress executive emphasised the shape of things to come in a resolution on the position of Indians in South Africa under the Unión's new land legislation restricting Asiatic ownership to certain areas. This resolution, following the Government of India's decision to terminate the trade pact with South Africa, declared that: "A civilisation . . . . imposing political and economic restrictions on coloured and Asatic peoples must contain the seeds of future wars and its own destruction." In added: "The Committee are of the opinion that the contemplated breach of trade relations . . . . is the mildest step that the Government of India could have taken."

That "Government of India," by the way, was a mixed Indian and British one whose acts were subject to the Viceroy's veto. What may have been the nature of the steps an independent Indian Government would have taken? That the matter has since been put up by India to UNO indicates that it is regarded as little short of a *casus belli*. Indeed, Dr. N. B. Khare, then Government of India Member for Commonwealth Relations, in an address at New Delhi on May 10, 1946, expressed the hope that when India had a National Government she would declare war on South Africa if the latter "persisted in its anti-Indian policy." South Africa's attitude all along has been that its land legislation is a domestic affair, as indeed it is, however objectionable colour-conscious Indians may find

its policy of racial segregation. Moslems who segregate their women under the custom of *purdah* and Hindus who segregate themselves within their caste system, are perhaps not the best situated to rail against South Africa's restrictive laws.

Intervention in the affairs of other countries on behalf of Indian traders and settlers is not confined to South Africa, though, at the moment, it is restricted to countries fringing the Indian Ocean. We have Pundit Nehru's conviction, expressed during his visit to Singapore in March, 1946, that "amongst the peoples of the Indian Ocean countries there will grow a closer union—including Australia—of which India will be the centre." If and when this takes place what may be the attitude of the "centre" to Australia's language law, under which anyone can be excluded—even an Englishman—who fails to pass a test in any language the immigration authorities may select, from Gaelic to Greek?

At present there are no more than a handful of Indian traders, hawkers and students in Australia, and, therefore, beyond the traditional national sentiment against Asiatic immigration, no sharp affront to India's "interests." But nearer home, in lands whereto there has in the past been considerable Indian migration, these "interests" are closely watched. Malaya and Burma, for example.

During his Singapore visit already referred to, Pundit Nehru said to the Indians of Malaya: "I can only repeat the advice I gave to Indians in Burma and Ceylon. Indians in these countries will have to choose in law whether they are to be nationals of those countries or nationals of India." And a couple of weeks later the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, meeting in New Dehli, passed a resolution on the position of Indians in Burma which, while magnanimously recognising the right of Burma to develop her national economy in the best interests of her own people, declared: "In view of the great part which Indians have played

in the development of her national life and economy for decades past, the Federation is convinced that the right and privilege of Indians to take their proper place in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Burma, and to re-establish themselves in the various activities of that country, are irresistible and cannot be denied."

If in Nehru's Singapore statement and the F.I.C.C.I.'s Burma resolution can be detected some slight resemblance to Hitlerian utterances of the nineteen-thirties regarding extra-Reich Germans in the Sudetenland and elsewhere, that resemblance cannot be dismissed as purely coincidental. When Indian leaders, political or economic, use the word "centre" —as, for instance, India as the centre of an Indian Ocean union, or, government of the Centre, i.e., New Delhi—it connotes paramountcy. With Hindus it is once a Hindu, always a Hindu, and since Congress denies the claim of the Moslems to be a separate nation (mainly on the ground that the forbears of the mass of Indian Moslems were converts from Hinduism) it also seems that once an Indian, always an Indian. With considerable numbers of Indians long settled in the Mauritius, in East Africa, in Fiji and on the Corentyne coast of Central America, the nationalism of the Brown Empire is offered as wide a scope as formerly was that of the Brown Shirts. And both have experienced the auto-intoxication of emotionalism.

CHAPTER 20.

It may be true that many hands make light work, although it's doubtful that they would be much help in threading a needle or operating a typewriter, but it can hardly be denied that many opinions make for much confusion. This being so, anyone may be excused for being in a fog about the India of to-morrow. It may be, as ex-Viceroy Lord Linlithgow is reported to have said, that the country will break up when the British leave and that there won't be a united democratic India for another hundred years. It may be a question, as Mahatma Gandhi said, of who will take over India—God or anarchy. It may be that Mr. Attlee's hope will be fulfilled and India will become the Light of Asia. On the other hand, India may prove just the opposite. Opinions on all matters are so much affected by one's own wishes, by political or ideological convictions, by personal associations, or by sheer prejudice. India's own contradictions and contradictory Indians but help to confuse the issue.

In the preceding pages I have sought to show various aspects of the India I have lived and worked in and known, off and on, for more than thirty years. It remains now only to make the final debit and credit entries, leaving it to you to strike a balance and to the future to audit the account.

First and foremost, can the full transfer of power from a British to an Indian authority be accomplished without a bloody upheaval? In March, 1946, it would have seemed not. The country then was on the verge of civil war—with nationalists of all parties against the British, and Hindus and Sikhs against Moslems. But three elderly gentlemen of the British Cabinet went out to face the storm and succeeded by patient negotiation in producing agreement, in principle at least, to certain proposals. The fourteen weeks the Cabinet mission spent in seeking to reconcile the irreconcilable in the hot weather, which tests and topples even robust young men, paradoxically gave

time for a cooling of passions that had become inflamed to the point of hysteria.

The six-point plan eventually grudgingly accepted by rival interests was :—

1. There should be a Union of India, embracing both British India and the Princes' States, which should deal with Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communications, and should have the powers necessary to raise the finances required.
2. The Union should have an executive and a legislature constituted from British and Indian States representatives. Any question raising a major communal issue in the legislature should require for its decision a majority of the representatives present, and the voting of each of the two major communities (Hindu and Moslem).
3. All subjects other than the Union subjects and all residuary powers should be vested in the provinces.
4. The States will retain all subjects and powers other than those ceded to the Union.
5. Provinces should be free to form groups with executives and legislatures, and each group could determine the provincial subjects to be taken in common.
6. The constitution of the Union and of the groups should contain a provision whereby any province could, by a majority vote of its legislative assembly, call for a reconsideration of the terms of the constitution after an initial period of ten years and at ten yearly intervals thereafter.

Keeping in mind the suspicions and antagonisms existing in India, does this six-point plan seem fair and reasonable; does it appear to offer the freedom of association and decision that reasonable men could accept? It is on record that its salve took the sting out of both Hindu and Moslem die-hards, but its successful working quite obviously demands a desire to

make it work and the determination of communal and party leaders to erect a stable constitution on the foundation the plan provides.

It would be idle to suggest that dangers of a major clash are past, or to deny that some of those upon whom responsibility lies continue to voice irresponsible utterances. For example, Jawaharlal Nehru, shortly after his election as President of the Congress Party, told a Press conference in Bombay, on June 10, 1946, that the division of India into groups might not materialise when the new constitution was framed by the Constituent Assembly. "But for the Moslem League," he asserted, "the entire country is opposed to grouping which, approached from any point of view, will not work."

Mr. Jinnah who, while insisting that the Moslems are a separate nation, compromised on his Pakistan demand to accept the six-point plan, did not ignore Nehru's unconciliatory remarks. Though at first willing to form or join an Interim Government, he refused Moslem League participation when, in July, 1946, the Viceroy invited Nehru to submit names for the first all-Indian Cabinet. Mr. Jinnah, rightly or wrongly, took the view that the Moslem League had been double-crossed. August 16, 1946, was fixed as the Moslem Day of Protest. That day saw in Calcutta the start of the bloodiest Hindu-Moslem clashes in recent years.

Hindus blame the slaughter on the Moslem League's action in calling for mass demonstrations, but is Pundit Nehru himself to be regarded as beyond the target of Gandhi's warning in "Harijan" of April 28, 1946, that "Many people imagine that they alone are right and everyone else wrong, and they do not consider there is anything unworthy in forcing their points of view down others' throats. . . . If this weakness continues, we shall go through rivers of blood once British rule goes. We may even come under the sway of some other foreign Power."

What judgment then is to be passed on Nehru's speech to two hundred thousand Bombay people on the evening of June 10, 1946, when he said: "Indians must be ready to face bullets and bayonets to wrest freedom from the British if Congress fails to frame, through the Constituent Assembly, a constitution for the complete sovereignty and independence of the masses."

Since it is left to Indians, elected by the Indian Provincial legislatures at the rate of one member per million of population, with the allocation between Hindus and Moslems proportionate to the seats held by them in the legislatures, to devise their own constitution, within or without the framework of the British Commonwealth, where is the need to "wrest freedom from the British"? Is it to be inferred from Nehru's inflammatory words that, failing a constitutional agreement on their own terms, the Hindus will attempt to resolve the issue by force?

The next point for balance and auditing is the question of new India remaining master of its own affairs. It is proposed that when power is fully transferred mutual Indo-British interests shall be secured by a treaty covering, among other things, capital investments, trade and general security. Pending the completion of the Indianisation of the Indian armed services to the topmost grades and the provision of first-class naval and air forces, British staff officers and instructors, as well as warships and air squadrons, are to continue to figure in the defence arrangements. The matter of the employment of British forces in internal security is in a different category and probably will depend on the degree to which internal strife affects India's ability to attend to its own external security.

Internecine strife apart, whence could come in the forseeable future any external intervention in India's affairs. Certainly not from a Britain bound by treaty relations, and hardly, if only on account of distance, from the United States. Of the other major Powers, China may be ruled out, for, although she

lies within marching distance, she is enmeshed in her own disunity. There remains only Russia. Although the Soviet reaches a common border with the Indian State of Kashmir and, being largely Asiatic, has a natural concern with developments in continental Asia, little is published, in Europe at any rate, of what Moscow thinks and says about India. But we are not so much in the dark regarding what Indians say and think about Russia.

We have the Aga Khan telling a Press conference in Bombay, in March, 1946, that he does not believe Russia would be allowed to take over India when the British moved out, adding that any Soviet penetration was more likely to be of a commercial nature. His Highness, who was replying to questions as to the likelihood of Russian "expansionism" affecting an independent India, put in the afterthought that the Soviet "might like better to deal commercially with a Communist India." We have also had Moslem Leaguer Sir Feroz Khan Noon assert during the hot-temper period of March-May, 1946, that, if all else failed, Russia would be asked to help achieve Pakistan, and Congress Central Assembly secretary Professor Ranga counter with the assurance that, once India is as effectively armed as the U.S.S.R., she would have nothing to do with "the new imperialism from the North."

During and since the visit of the Cabinet mission to New Delhi the Indian newspapers have given considerable evidence of a lively perturbation lest the national horoscope should show Ursa moving in as Leo moves out, but the clearest cut statement on Russian propaganda against the British offer of independence has come from the most statesmanlike figure in all India—Mr. C. R. Rajagopalachari. In a statement given at Madras on June 2, 1946, he declared that Russia does not want a settlement now, as a Britain free from the Indian problem would be a stronger Britain. "The Russian attitude," he said, "is dictated by a fear of Anglo-America and not by any concern for India. . . . One can therefore see why Russia wants Indian

agitation kept at white-heat until her own plans for security and greater power are completed."

Whether Russia has any intentions towards India and, if so, whether they are benign or malign is something accurately known only within the walls of the Kremlin, but in view of India's geographical position—quite apart from her agricultural and industrial production and potential—making her one of the most important strategical areas in the world, it is easy to understand that Indians *expect* Tartar eyes to be peering over the Pamirs.

The next point for consideration is ideology—Left and Right. The communal gulf in India is notorious, but many consider the rift between Left and Right to be even more threatening. To date, the forces of the Left are by no means thoroughly organised, but already the cry of "Long live the Revolution" has been heard. Since the war ended, strikes have increased in numbers and volume, in spite of an almost complete absence of strike funds and the repressive measures adopted by Indian provincial governments. The militancy of labour is marked, although, as union leaders admit, most of the stoppages have been neither co-ordinated nor regulated. At the same time the narrowly averted general railway strike in the summer of 1946 demonstrated the power of one section to threaten India with a complete and disastrous standstill. The post and telegraph workers' strike a little later provided another straw in the wind.

According to figures submitted to the All-India Trade Union Congress, at Nagpur, in April, 1946, by the president, Mr. M. B. Bose, 500 unions with a membership of half a million are now affiliated to this body. This represents but a fragment of India's total labour strength, but trade unionism is comparatively new and has yet to demonstrate its capacity to win on a wide front. Mr. Bose believes that with a political settlement with Britain, and the resultant concentration on domestic issues, the Indian T.U.C. will rapidly increase its strength for a hastening of its march to the goal of a Socialistic State.

With about 15 millions (including dependants) affected by unemployment resulting from the liquidation of war-time activities—as reported to the Organisation of Industrial Employers by Sir Rahimtoola Chinoy—the creed of the Left, and of the Communists in particular, can hardly fail to make a more forceful appeal than hitherto.

The question here is whether a Leftist India would adhere to the social democracy of Western Europe, or look for support and strength to the Russian authoritarian model.

It is held by certain other observers that, on present indications, the probability is that the Right, should lockout and police action fail to stem the rising tide of the Left, may attempt to divert it into a National Socialism, Fascist in character and intention. In this, it is said, certain aspects of Hinduism would assist, as also the habit of mass obedience inculcated by Gandhi, himself somewhere right of centre.

As straws in the wind there are the statement of Mr. G. D. Birla, the Calcutta industrial magnate, to a B.B.C. correspondent, that "India will have to adopt a mixture of capitalism and socialism," the report in the Delhi edition of "The Statesman" of May 6, 1946, that Indian provincial police departments are acquiring considerable stocks of up-to-date automatic and other weapons, *both offensive and defensive*, and the announcement of the Bombay Government Home Minister, Mr. Morarjee Desai, that consideration is being given to a plan to absorb former personnel of the Indian National Army—raised in Burma and Malaya by the fascist, Subhas Chandra Bose—into the police force.

The next question poses itself. What of the Princes? For the most part the Congress Party is at enmity with them, but much depends on the extent of the powers the Princes are able to retain under an all-India Union. At best they will be a minority, however influential. Without the support of direct treaty relations with Britain, the India of the Princes must rely on political agility rather than its regal status.

Finally, if the elements with the strongest urge to power take full charge, what then? In that case the prospects, but not the certainty, are that behind a convenient but flimsy facade of democracy some form of totalitarianism will operate towards the attainment of imperial ambitions. Given a first-class navy and air force, India is ideally placed to dominate the entire sea area from Suez to the China coast and down to the Southern Ocean. And with land power developed from the point it reached at the end of the war, India should also be able to overawe the entire Middle East from Palestine to Indo-China, barring Russian opposition.

Congress leaders and the industrialists who finance the party are aware of the possibilities and there is ground for the suspicion that Congress opposition to the Pakistan idea was prompted, to some extent, by the fear that a sovereign Moslem minority might assume the stature of a majority by linking up with their co-religionists from Egypt to Indonesia to form the great Pan-Islamic confederation which remains the dream of the followers of the Prophet. Such a Moslem interlocking obviously would short-circuit any Hindu notions of imperiality from Kabul to Canberra and Saigon to Simonstown.

To conclude, one is disinclined, even on all the accumulated evidence, to reject the fundamental hope that perhaps the gloomy signs and portents have been misread, to seek reassurance that the visible turbulence and cross-currents are but a temporary result of a monsoonal cloudburst of nationalism and that presently the Indian torrent will broaden and subside into the serene flow of an Indus or Ganges a scorched and thirsty earth would welcome. Much depends on the quarter in which the wind sets when the variable Gandhi breeze and the Jinnah nor-wester blow no more. There are those who prefer to believe that, as with past physical storms, so with the present political gale it will prove that :

"The East rose up to meet the blast
With sullen cold disdain,
She let the legions thunder past
Then plunged in thought again."

In the meantime to those accorded the task of shaping India's destiny there stands, chiselled in the stone of the Viceroy's palace, Britain's challenging reminder that: "Liberty will not descend to a people, a people must raise themselves to liberty."

In recalling that a leavening of responsibility is a prerequisite to such a raising, it cannot be forgotten that India is traditionally addicted to the unyeasted *chappati*.

London,

October 6, 1946.